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OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, Editor

Associate Editors

DOROTHY VAN DOREN MAURITZ A. HALLGREN
DEVERE ALLEN

Dramatic Editor JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Literary Editor HENRY HAZLITT

Contributing Editors

HEYWOOD BROUN FREDA KIRCHWEY MARK VAN DOREN
LEWIS S. GANNETT H. L. MENCKEN CARL VAN DOREN
JOHN A. HOBSON NORMAN THOMAS ARTHUR WARNER

DAVID BOEHM, Advertising Manager

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IF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES has made a good start by doing away with the old gag rules—we cannot be enthusiastic over the election of Mr. Garner to the Speakership—and the Senate Progressives have rightly defeated the reelection of Senator Moses as president pro tem, the fact remains that both parties are as yet without a clear-cut program or vigorous and able leadership. It is true, as Paul Anderson points out in this issue, that the Democrats have now set themselves to the task of building a program, but that does not excuse the failure of the leaders to come together during the vacation in order to have not only a program but bills ready for action at the opening of the session. Meanwhile, there are thousands and thousands of individual bills going into both houses; we shall see a session of extraordinary complexity, if not complete confusion. It is, however, gratifying to note that even without voting the Congress has been able to make its opinions felt on certain questions. It has rightly refused to consider the revival of the World War Foreign Debt Commission, for the question of debts must always come back to Congress, and the Congress ought to meet and grapple with it and come to a decision, whether it spells disaster for the country and for Europe or not. The leaders of House and Senate also refused to sign the paper Mr. Mellon had prepared authorizing the President to waive the payments due from abroad December 15. Congress had a right to ask time for consideration; the fault is Mr. Hoover's for having refused the extra session.

IN HIS "TWELVE-POINT PROGRAM" the President has at last revealed his plan for dealing with the economic crisis. Some of Mr. Hoover's proposals, if vague, are undoubtedly sound enough within their limits, but nearly all of them are mere palliatives, and not one of them goes to the root of the trouble. The program is vitiated at the very start by the President's assertion that "the major steps that we must take are domestic. The action needed is in the home field." As long as Mr. Hoover continues to take this attitude we cannot expect any real improvement. The most urgent steps that the Administration must take are in the international field. The greatest obstacle to an American business recovery lies in the state of our foreign trade; the greatest obstacle in the path of our foreign trade is our high protective tariff, and Mr. Hoover, in his message to Congress, again firmly opposed any reduction in our preposterous rates. But though Mr. Hoover does not include the question in his twelve-point program, he and Secretary Mellon are at least to be congratulated on finally recognizing the necessity for a reduction in the international war debts. In his domestic program, however, Mr. Hoover continues to oppose compulsory unemployment insurance and, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, to pretend that voluntary contributions have adequately "solved" the problem.

SECRETARY DOAK continues to regard with unreasoning and narrow suspicion every immigrant who comes to this country. He would have the government stamp these aliens as potential criminals until they have lived here on probation for at least ten years. He feels, as he said in his annual report to Congress, that immigration "is no longer a substantial economic menace"—primarily because so few aliens are now being admitted. Nevertheless, he believes it necessary to control under the most rigid sort of rules those few who do manage to get in. He would have them fingerprinted before they can become citizens, and he would have the government reserve for a period of five years the right to cancel the citizenship certificate of any naturalized alien, "in case he violates the law in such manner as to show a lack of proper intention on his part at the time of his admission to citizenship." Moreover, Mr. Doak strongly objects to giving the alien his full share of legal protection. He declared, said the New York *Times*, "that even in cases where guilt was clearly shown the efforts of the department were being handicapped by every possible resort to the courts." Mr. Doak's department has already shown such slight consideration for the legal rights of aliens that this latter declaration comes as no surprise. It is really a pity that Mr. Doak has to be bothered with interference by the courts. If he were not, he could proceed quite untroubled to destroy all that is left in this country of a once honored tradition not only of hospitality, but of justice to the stranger within our gates.

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THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S call for an economic conference of the nations has unfortunately met with coolness only. That there should be one is plain; it should have been called a year ago. Now Austen Chamberlain has publicly declared the difficulty to lie in the fact that those nations—plainly France and the United States—which ought to be most concerned would probably refuse to abide by the inevitable findings of the conference. There is the crux of the problem. Those two nations have not yet suffered enough from the crisis to be ready to readjust, however painfully, their own fiscal policies and their politics to the gravity of the international situation. Unfortunately, the crisis nears so rapidly that there is no time to wait for the American Congress and French financiers to awaken to the facts of the situation. We wish that every member of Congress might be able to read these words from an address by Nicholas Murray Butler:

> We are the chief sufferers by the war-debt settlement. As was said by Lord Hervey back in Walpole's time, we reserved for ourselves the poor consolation of being ruined last. . . . What use is it to take in millions of cash in Washington if billions of value are flying out of the windows of the farmhouses, the workmen's dwellings, the industrial, commercial, and financial establishments of the land?

DOMESTIC POLITICS may have been chiefly responsible for the fall of the more or less moderate Wakatsuki Government in Japan. In any event the personal ambition of Kenso Adachi, Minister of the Interior in that government, to head the Minseito Party appears to have made it impossible for Baron Wakatsuki to continue longer in office. But the change in cabinets at this time is most untimely and may easily have dire results. This is not only because the change has come while the Manchurian situation is still critical, but because it has brought into power the imperialists and interventionists of the reactionary Seiyukai Party. The Seiyukai was the party of the late Premier Tanaka, who had such positive ideas as to Japan's special position in Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia. Under Tanaka and the Seiyukai Party the Japanese replaced the fairly liberal Chinese policy of the Minseito Party with a harshly militaristic policy of direct intervention in Chinese affairs. It is true that in the present Manchurian controversy the militarists had returned to the "positive policy" of Baron Tanaka, and had compelled the Wakatsuki Cabinet to support them. Nevertheless, the presence of men like Foreign Minister Shidehara in the Wakatsuki Government acted as a potential check upon the militarists. Now even that counterbalancing factor, however slight it may have been, has been removed. In place of the moderate Shidehara will be found the outspoken imperialist, Kenkichi Yoshizawa, and he will be supported by other interventionists, among them Jotaro Yamamoto, former president of the South Manchuria Railway Company, who once declared that the railway "has a more important mission [in Manchuria] than a merely economic one."

THIS NEW VICTORY of the Japanese militarists came immediately after the League of Nations had confirmed, and by implication had approved, their seizure of Manchuria. The Paris resolution, which sets forth the League's final position on the Sino-Japanese dispute, reveals nothing except that any strong member can defy the League and compel it to bow to that defiance. By this resolution the League abandoned its earlier demand that the Japanese troops be withdrawn as the first step toward an adjustment of the Manchurian dispute. The resolution sets up a commission of inquiry, but it provides for no positive action whatever. It seeks neither to determine who the aggressor may have been nor to check further hostilities. Indeed, it specifically states that it shall not "be within the competence of the commission to interfere with the military arrangements of either party." This can only mean that the League has decided to let the Japanese carry on their illegal military operations, and thus complete the conquest of Manchuria. Such, apparently, is the interpretation placed upon the resolution by the Japanese. They have announced that they will send 5,000 additional troops to Manchuria for the ostensible purpose "of coping with the bandit menace," as the Tokio correspondent of the New York *Times* put it, "but it can be considered certain that as soon as the rivers freeze definite steps will be taken to clean Chang Hsueh-liang's army from Chinchow, if he still refuses to withdraw peacefully." Virtually the only check on the Manchurian war is economic; Japan is in financial difficulties and has been forced off the gold standard, while the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods is becoming increasingly effective.

THE CESSATION OF WORK on the giant Cunarder of 73,000 tons which was under construction at Clydeside is a hard blow to British prestige. This was to have been not only the world's largest, but finest and fastest liner—an overwhelming answer to the present supremacy of the North German Lloyd with its Europa and Bremen. But the heartbreaking conditions in the North Atlantic trade, which the directors think will be worse next year, have compelled the Cunard Company to cease construction after $5,000,000 had been expended and the hull had risen to the ninth deck—a happening without parallel in the annals of the company since its first contract for ships was awarded on March 18, 1839. For the Clyde this is a crushing decision, since British shipbuilding is at lowest ebb and 3,500 more men must now go on the dole, joining 70 per cent of the shipyard men who are idle now. An appeal that the government finish the ship has already been made, and rejected by Walter Runciman for the Cabinet. Undoubtedly the Prime Minister would like to help, for his Labor Government had agreed to assume that much of the ship's insurance which private underwriters could not underwrite. Meanwhile, the London bankers explain their inability to advance further funds for the ship on the ground that they have $275,000,000 frozen in Germany. With the White Star and other great British lines in financial difficulties, and no foreign orders coming in, the outlook for the British shipyards is of the blackest.

NINE NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, headed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, submitted a memorial to President Hoover on December 14 asking an end to the financial dictatorship of Haiti by the United States and the complete restoration of self-government in that country. While praising President Hoover for the steps taken so far to restore the sovereignty of Haiti, violently seized by the United States, the memorial

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states that "at present the Haitian government cannot appropriate a dollar for any purpose without the consent of our financial advisers"; for example, on October 26 last the American Minister to the Haitian government held up all salaries except those paid to Americans! The memorial also asks the immediate withdrawal of all American marines, saying that as it only takes four years to train an American officer at West Point it would seem as if in sixteen years of American domination of Haiti there must have been ample time to train the native Haitian constabulary. The memorial also points out that the Republic of Haiti has repeatedly assured the American government that in the event of war no foreign power will be permitted to get a foothold of any kind on Haitian soil. Finally, the memorial correctly demands a new treaty between the two countries "negotiated with the consent of the legislatures of both nations."

TWO NEGROES LYNCHED in Lewisburg, West Virginia, on December 10 bring the total for the year to thirteen. This is bad enough, although it is vastly better than the total of twenty-five for 1930. This improvement, indeed, is surprising in view of increasingly depressed economic conditions in the South and a corresponding increase in animosity toward the Negro wherever he interferes with white men's jobs. Governor Conley of West Virginia has issued the by now usual statement of horrified indignation at the lynching and a promise, also to be expected, that the lynchers will be speedily apprehended and summarily dealt with—if they can be identified. We do not wish in any way to disparage the Governor's statement or to imply that we are skeptical of his sincere desire to bring about the arrest and conviction of the mob leaders. We merely await results, as we are still awaiting them from Maryland, where a lynching occurred on December 4. Governor Ritchie also issued a statement denouncing the lynchers and calling for their blood; but so far the only blood that has been spilt has been the blood of the lynched.

COLLEGIATE VOTING on disarmament reveals a steady trend toward pacifism. In the recent poll of students on questions relative to disarmament, 78 per cent of the Yale undergraduate body, or 2,453, replied. Only 107 voted to keep the heavy armaments of the world; 1,269 approved of moderate armaments; and 987—almost 41 per cent—urged complete disarmament. On this same query Dartmouth students recently split as follows: for heavy armament, 76; for 50 per cent disarmament, 226; for total disarmament, 359. More than 44 per cent of those voting in the senior class at Yale favored independent reduction of arms by the United States; in Dartmouth, 152 students favored total disarmament by the United States irrespective of other nations, 332 opposed independent disarmament, and 425 advocated partial independent disarmament in varying degrees. Balloting in Colgate and several other institutions where votes have been published follow the same general trend. Meantime, the New History Society, "looking to the younger generation in the colleges and universities to develop international fellowship," is offering a first prize of $300, a second prize of $200, and a third prize of $100 for the best original papers of not more than 1,200 words on "How May the Colleges Promote World Peace?" Details are to be outlined in the January issue of the *New Historian*. The contest closes on April 5, 1932; the judges thus far announced are John Dewey, Devere Allen, William Floyd, Tucker P. Smith, James G. McDonald, and Kirby Page.

FOURSQUARE TO ALL WINDS Jane Addams has stood in her advocacy of peace. No one has deserved the Nobel Prize more, and to no one could it come more fittingly, or at a better moment than when she is ill from a serious operation. She has, indeed, long been the foremost woman citizen of America. But that did not save her during the war from much abuse, notably at the hands of the New York *Times* and other highly respectable journals of the conservative classes. Hence, it is a great satisfaction that within the current year she has received three notable awards, one from Bryn Mawr, one from *Pictorial Review*, and now the Nobel Prize, the greatest of all. Thus has been well recognized a pacifism that has never known any cowardice or compromise. We wish we could say as much for Nicholas Murray Butler, who divides the Nobel Prize with Miss Addams. He was a great pacifist before the war, and since the war as administrator of large Carnegie funds he has shown genuine zeal for the cause of peace and disarmament. Only last week he again rightly warned the world that its fate for at least the next decade is involved in the Geneva conference. But during the war his record was thoroughly bad; he subordinated what he knew in his heart to be right to mob psychology, especially that of the rich mob which donates to Columbia and controls its Board of Trustees. None the less, we are glad to add that no public man in America today is making better or wiser or more courageous addresses on national and international affairs.

"WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!" said Samuel Morse as his first message over the telegraph eighty-seven years ago. And the mystery of the telegraph and more particularly the wireless remains to common men today. Thirty years ago Guglielmo Marconi heard, at Cape Breton, Newfoundland, a three-dot "S" tapped out from Cornwall, England. That anniversary was celebrated on December 12 by a radio program in which fifteen nations participated, a series of sounds heard literally around the earth. Music from Japan and Rio de Janiero; speeches from London and Paris; words from Spain, from Belgium, from Italy, from Poland—all were heard in rapid succession in New York. A marvelous, an incredible instrument, a machine that ninety-nine men out of a hundred can only wonder at without in the least understanding! Nevertheless, they can manipulate it. They can, with a turn of a dial, hear the Philadelphia Orchestra play a symphony concert as well as if they sat in sight of the instruments; they can also hear, with another twist of the wrist, broadcasts by the "School of Health," a skit entitled "Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Goldstein," "Three Little Funsters," the "Sleepy Time Club," and an address on "Thought in Action," by the Reverend S. Parkes Cadman. God works in mysterious ways, to be sure, but his works do not always fittingly proclaim him. There is no law compelling all citizens of the United States to listen to Amos 'n' Andy, but to radio listeners who prefer programs of a slightly more elevated nature the prevalence of programs of the Amos 'n' Andy type are a great drawback to the perfect enjoyment of Signor Marconi's marvelous discovery.

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Mr. Hoover's Tax Program

WHATEVER may be the deficiencies of the Administration's tax program, it must at least be conceded that it is much better than any outsider until lately had reason to expect it to be. As late as a month ago Mr. Hoover seemed to have shut his eyes to the necessity of any tax increase whatever. Now he and Secretary Mellon have presented Congress with a set of tax proposals which, for the most part, deserve a respectful hearing.

Secretary Mellon estimates that if there is no increase in taxes, there will be a gross deficit next June of $2,123,000,000, and of $1,417,000,000 on June 30, 1933. Mr. Mellon does not propose tax increases sufficient to wipe out these deficits entirely. He presents a tax program which he estimates should bring in additional revenues of $390,000,000 between January and June of next year, and of $920,000,000 for the following fiscal year. If estimates of receipts and expenditures were realized, this would still leave a deficit of $1,733,000,000 next June and of $497,000,000 in June of 1933. As these deficits, however, allow for statutory debt retirement, Mr. Mellon expects that the net increase in the public debt next June will not be more than $1,321,000,000, that there will be no net increase in 1933, and that in 1934 net reduction of the debt will be resumed through the sinking fund.

This general program has already been vigorously attacked from opposite points of view. Mr. Walter Lippmann has very ably stated the opinion of those who hold that the budget must be balanced entirely. Professor E. R. A. Seligman, on the other hand, contends that in Secretary Mellon's program "too much is expected from taxes and too little from loans." Neither of these criticisms can be dismissed as unintelligent, but *The Nation* believes that Secretary Mellon's position on this point is more defensible than that of either of these critics. The case against any attempt to balance the budget completely at this time is a very strong one. It would, to begin with, be practically impossible to do so. Mr. Hoover, it is true, should have asked Congress to raise tax rates months ago. Last June at the very latest, when he had been compelled to propose his debt moratorium and when a deficit of $903,000,000 for 1931 was officially established, it was the President's duty to call Congress in special session and propose most of the tax increases he is now recommending. Such a measure, enacted last summer, would have reduced the prospective 1932 debt by several hundred millions of dollars more than it is now possible to reduce it. Discussion of what the Administration should have done last spring, however, is futile. It would be unwise at the present time, in any case, to impose new taxes greatly in excess of those that Secretary Mellon actually proposes. He is quite right in pointing out that "it is not easy for any people to determine to assume a large additional tax burden at a time when their resources are depleted through business depression." There is, moreover, as *The Nation* remarked in its issue of December 2, a positive defense to be made of a policy of paying off loans at an unusually high rate in good years, and offsetting this to some extent even by fresh borrowing in years of severe depression. There is no sounder principle in taxation than that the burden should be placed on individuals in proportion to their relative "capacity to pay," and if this principle is sound as applied to individuals, it is equally sound as applied to years. Further, since we reduced our debt from a total of $26,600,000,000 in April, 1919, to $16,200,000,000 at the end of the 1930 fiscal year, a net increase in the public debt of $1,321,000,000 would not damage the national credit. On the other hand, there is no assurance that the deficit will not be more than this, particularly when Mr. Hoover admits that receipts for 1932 will fall below the original estimates by the staggering total of $1,717,000,000. Further, when he remarks that the present increase in taxes "shall be definitely terminated in two years from next July," he is making a statement that he has no real warrant for making, particularly since all his previous guesses regarding the length and extent of the depression have been notoriously bad. All this does not mean that it is immediately necessary to balance the budget, but it does mean that it is necessary, if the government's credit is to continue to maintain unquestioned standing, as it must for new bond issues, that Congress show its readiness to raise taxes courageously in the present crisis.

Many of the specific tax increases which Secretary Mellon proposes, based to a large extent on the revenue act of 1924, are also worthy of indorsement. This applies to the taxes on passenger automobiles and trucks, on tires, on radios and phonographs, on amusement admissions over ten cents, to the increase in the tobacco tax, to the restoration of the income-tax rates to a maximum of 40 per cent compared with the present maximum of 20 per cent, and to the rebroadening of the base to include lower incomes. The taxes on checks and drafts and on telephone and telegraph messages, however, are extremely undesirable. They would not only be unpopular and objectionable as nuisance taxes, but they would place a needless burden on general business activity. The necessary revenue could be raised from many sources not mentioned by Secretary Mellon. Congress might consider a small federal gasoline tax and taxes on numerous luxuries and semi-luxuries such as domestic jewelry, cosmetics, perfume, chewing gum, and the like. The corporation-income tax, which it is proposed to raise from 12 to only 12½ per cent, could be raised to 15 per cent. Above all, the inheritance tax could be raised very much above the 25 per cent maximum suggested by Secretary Mellon—at least to the income-tax maximum of 40 per cent, with gift taxes to prevent evasion. The 40 per cent rate on inheritances existed in the law of 1924, and European inheritance-tax rates are much higher than this.

These increasing revenues will be worse than ineffective unless accompanied by drastic economies in expenditure. The most obvious place for these is in the army and navy appropriations. But the very fact that our present federal expenditure, wholly apart from the interest and sinking-fund requirements on the war debt, is more than five times what it was before the war, is sufficient prima facie evidence of extravagant spending.

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Navy or President?

WHO runs this Republic—the navy men or the Executive? We had thought this question settled long ago. The founders of this country, with their deep-seated hatred of the ships and sailors and soldiers of His Majesty King George III, certainly believed that they had decided the issue once and for all. But today it is pretty clear that the navy thinks it directs the government, that it does not recognize the President as the Commander-in-Chief and proposes not only to pay no attention to his wishes and program but openly to defy them. For that is what is now taking place. The annual report of the Secretary of the Navy calmly ignored the President's policy in that it was a well-considered plea for the enlargement of the navy which the President seeks to check. Now Rear Admiral Upham, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, has made a report to the Secretary in which he declares that the new operating plan of the navy, insisted on by President Hoover, "will inevitably result in materially lowered training and efficiency, and in the event of war would be of the gravest consequence"; that it means "the serious impairment of the strength of the navy as an arm of the national defense."

This plainly raises the whole question of who is to run the navy. The President has just given his word to the Congress that the navy has never been in a higher state of efficiency and that this situation will continue. The Rear Admiral's statement is plainly a direct challenge which will further fan the flames of Mr. Hoover's unhappy controversy with the Navy League, which he should have ignored as beneath his contempt. The way out would be prompt action by the man in the White House. If Mr. Hoover had a normal amount of backbone, Rear Admiral Upham would be detached from the Bureau of Navigation—always a hotbed of intrigue—and Secretary Adams's resignation would be reposing in the archives of the Administration. For the simple truth is that, whether he is in this case mistaken or not, the responsibility is Mr. Hoover's under the Constitution, that he has the clear right to demand loyalty of his subordinates and to dismiss them if they cannot give him that loyalty in fullest measure. That an Executive may be overruled by Congress is always possible since that is provided for, but the idea that the President may be overruled at any time by any of our too numerous admirals, or by his Secretary of the Navy, is just a little bit too much.

If this were a sporadic case of insubordination it would be easy to express this opinion and let it go at that. But the publication of Rear Admiral Upham's outburst is but one more incident in a long list. Ten days ago Rear Admiral Moffett also forgot that, under the United States government, policies are formulated not by naval or military officers but by the civilian authorities, and demanded in his capacity of Chief of Aviation "more money, more ships, and more and faster airplanes." Even the Associated Press commented on the "bluntness" with which this admiral penned his demands. This officer, who appears to be in charge of navy propaganda, has been heard from before. It was apparently he who sent out to "Navy Day" speakers instructions to make an unblushing demand for the increased navy to which the President is opposed. Then he became worried and issued fresh instructions of a milder character. By pure inadvertence—of course!—both sets were given to the press, and from the jingo dailies the big-navy appeals got a lot of the desired publicity.

The Navy Department has a record of its own. Mr. Adams first disobeyed the President by submitting an increased budget instead of the reduced one asked for. The department then released to the press a confidential document to the effect that the President was demanding a $61,000,000 reduction in the estimates when he was asking a reduction of only $20,000,000 below the current appropriations. When to this are added the "accidental" release of the false instructions and Rear Admiral Upham's latest attack, it must be perfectly obvious that any vigorous Executive would give Secretary Adams just about twenty-four hours to clean house or start home for Boston.

Well, we hear it asked, should not chiefs of bureaus and Cabinet members have the right to speak out if they believe the country in jeopardy? Not if they are in the military or naval services. Just imagine a battleship commander talking publicly against the policies of Rear Admiral Upham or Secretary Adams. How long would it be before he "hit the beach"? He would be lucky if he escaped court martial. When a man enters the army or navy he deliberately accepts the muzzle; he agrees to subordinate himself and his opinions to the discipline of the service. Why is any rear admiral to be excepted? Why should the department be permeated with insubordination? There was formerly a clause in the Army Regulations reading:

> SUBORDINATION TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES
>
> §1559. Respect and obedience to the civil authorities of the land is the duty of all citizens, and more particularly of those who are armed in the public service.

In 1881 this was dropped out of the army regulations. It ought to go back into them and into those of the navy. And every bureau chief and rear admiral in the service ought to be compelled to paste it in his cap with this addition: "For it is the American way and the American people desire no other."

Brüning's Last Stand

CHANCELLOR BRÜNING himself inferentially admits that his drastic emergency decree of December 8 represents his final effort to save Germany from economic collapse and possible chaos this winter. The decree gives the government virtually absolute control over the economic life of Germany. It reduces wages in private industry, the salaries of all public officials, the prices of standardized articles, all house rents, and the interest rates on domestic loans, bonds, and mortgages, whether public or private. The decree also provides for the appointment of a price commissioner, who may upon his own initiative fix the prices of all commodities sold anywhere in Germany. One may question the wisdom and practicability of these and other provisions of the emergency order, and one may charge Brüning with having set himself up as dictator of Germany, but one must in any case acknowledge his great courage. Never before has the government of a capitalistic state gone so far toward controlling national economy by a single ges-

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ture. But, then, never before in peace times has a capitalistic state been faced with such grave problems as those now confronting Germany. If they are to be solved without injury to the state, immense courage is necessary.

Does Brüning today govern Germany with the consent of the governed? This is a serious question that can neither be readily answered nor lightly dismissed. In his decree of December 8 he incorporated definite measures designed to suppress popular opposition to the course he has chosen. Political meetings and the wearing of political uniforms are prohibited for the time being, persons who criticize public officials may be sent to prison, and the state authorities are clothed with extraordinary power to prevent violence. Brüning has gone to the extreme in overriding personal liberty, curbing free speech, and suppressing freedom of the press. He has promised that if these harsh measures do not suffice, martial law will be declared to protect the government. But the Chancellor must not forget that suppression invariably breeds violence. We admire him for his great courage, and it is possible that the end—stability and economic security—is to be reached by no other means. However, by his action Brüning is openly defying a considerable section of the German population. Adolf Hitler now lays claim to 15,000,000 followers, and the recent astounding election successes of the National Socialists suggest that this is not wholly fanciful. The Communist voters number 6,000,000 and their strength is also growing. Moreover, the opposition to Brüning within the still faithful Social Democratic Party is spreading rapidly. Should Brüning's program fail to accomplish the desired purpose, it is almost certain that that failure will bring an explosive reaction.

Two countries can in generous measure help Chancellor Brüning to prevent an internal collapse in Germany. France can do so by agreeing to a sharp downward revision in reparations, and the United States by agreeing to forego a large part, if not all, of the war debts owed to this country by Europe. But the mania of nationalism still keeps both of these countries blind to what has become an imperative duty, not to Germany, but to themselves. At the meeting of the special reparations committee held at Basel the German expert, Dr. Carl Melchior, presented a comprehensive and alarming statistical picture of Germany's plight. The figures he produced should have been enough to convince the most skeptical that Germany must be granted immediate and adequate relief. But the French delegate, Professor Charles Rist, according to the Associated Press, "declared the German case was invalidated by the very evidence submitted" by Dr. Melchior. The summary, Professor Rist said, "showed the great uncertainty in Germany, and was sufficient justification for the belief that the present was not the time to reevaluate Germany's capacity to pay." To what madness has their nationalism reduced the French! Even more unreasonable is the attitude of our own Congress. Mr. Hoover's suggestion that the war-debts question be reexamined was timid enough, but even this mild suggestion has met with the most obstinate resistance from Congress. Secretary Mellon's frank declaration that the European countries simply cannot pay "failed to break the Congressional resistance." Will anything less than the bankruptcy of Europe, with its inevitably disastrous effect upon this country, convince the Washington patriots that revision of the war debts is a question of economic security for everyone?

Look Up, Not Down!

SOME of Harold Bell Wright's novels have sold as many as 2,000,000 copies each. It is probably fitting, therefore, for young writers to attend to what he has to say about novel-writing. In a recent interview he declared modestly that he knew nothing of literature and was not competent to judge writers; he even added that he employed an assistant to correct his spelling, "because my own schooling is so terrible." But he has his ideas, nevertheless, about how books should be written.

There are some things, said Mr. Wright to begin with, which "should be beneath an artist's notice." "Although I believe I have made some very accurate studies of life I have known some things I would not care to put into any book of mine." "I feel the average reader wants entertainment plus. He wants to feel after reading a book that he has been entertained but has also gotten something out of it, some encouragement or a new outlook on life."

With these unexceptionable sentiments Mr. Wright aligns himself with the Stork-and-Santa-Claus school of fiction, as anyone might have supposed that he would. One might pause to wonder, however, just what sort of literature we might hope to have if his precept and example were generally followed. In the first place, let us take the Bible, that unfailing criterion whenever anything is to be demonstrated. The merest cursory glance at an index to that estimable work reveals the word "lust" and its derivatives listed forty-five times; there are seven "ravishes," eight "adulteries," nineteen "lewds," and the word, with its derivatives, that Mr. Wright would probably write "wh-re" if he wrote it at all is dignified by no fewer than forty-nine mentions. One might also urge on those who incline to Mr. Wright's point of view a careful reading of the stories of Tamar, David and Bathsheba, and Potiphar's wife, to mention no others.

Then there are the Greeks. But at them one gives up in despair. These husband-murdering, mother-marrying, virgin-ravishing creatures would have no place in Mr. Wright's literary paradise. Vergil and the other Latin poets come off no better; Chaucer—but let us pass quickly over Chaucer! Let us not pause too long with Shakespeare either, or Fielding; let us completely forget to list those misguided gentlemen Boccaccio, Rabelais, and Benjamin Franklin. Indeed, it is only when one comes into the safe fold of the nineteenth century that one feels Mr. Wright would be perfectly comfortable, and even there the unfortunate insinuations of "Moby Dick" might come unhappily under his eye. On the whole, one may conclude that it is just as well that Mr. Wright is not intimately acquainted with literature. It would be too strong for him.

His purpose in writing books is uplift; "mountain tops instead of sewers" are his province; he dislikes those writers "who like to stir life with a stick to get the stench out of it." Well, why not? There is a stench in life when it is stirred with a stick and there is an odor of sanctity. On the whole the stench has seemed to remain with us a little longer, but who can tell? We may yet see naughty Shakespeare, or even the lesser moderns who try to see sewers as well as mountain tops, give way to the undeviating, the relentless glare of sweetness and light.

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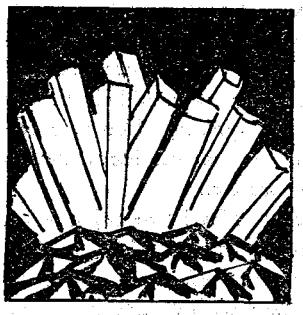
Speaking of Revolution . . .

By HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON



AS the purveyors of information for the masses might now write their little pieces but as they most assuredly won't.

Abraham Lincoln was the greatest statesman of all times. He said: "You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all the time." But Abraham Lincoln was wrong. If, like all other politicians, he had not felt obliged to flatter the mob whose votes he needed, he would have spoken as follows: "You can fool some of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, and furthermore if you are clever and unscrupulous enough you can fool all of the people all of the time."

The United States of America maintains a greater number of learned societies and bodies of savants than any other country in this or any other universe. The men who work for these societies are paid their princely salaries to keep our nation well at the head of the great international Procession of Progress. You see even so-called highbrows can at times be quite as useful as street cleaners or automobile mechanics. One of those men, a historian (remember, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford have written books, too), discovered that during the Middle Ages (when all mankind was steeped in darkness and long before America invented the machines that now make the world so rich and happy) and even in ancient times no country could ever hope to grow larger than just so many thousand square miles. If it grew any larger than just so many thousand square miles, it would disintegrate, which means go to pieces. In short, beyond a certain point it was size which destroyed the work of Caesar and Alexander. But it was not really size that did it in the last analysis. It was the inability to find enough men with first-rate brains to administer so large a territory which eventually doomed their empires to perish from the face of the earth.

The people of those dark and ignorant days seem to have known this. It must have been a bit of divine inspiration, for they were too deeply steeped in ignorance to find out anything for themselves. Nevertheless, they seem to have known this or to have felt it, for they rarely made the mistake of going beyond those limits imposed upon them by the wisdom of the Almighty. And right here, my friends, is where we ourselves have grievously sinned, and that is why the world today is in such a sad, sad plight. That is why millions starve and millions of others shiver in a world that has a plate of beans and an overcoat for everyone.

Do you remember what happened about a hundred years ago? Of course you don't, for we keep you so busy and so contented with trifles and gadgets and silly movies and cheap shows that you never have any spare time for anything serious, even if you had the brains to understand what the leaders of mankind who have brought you where you are today were talking about. I know, of course, that we have been telling you all this time that you yourselves have done everything that was ever done, that you built the pyramids and carved the statues of Praxiteles and painted the pictures of Michelangelo and wrote the symphonies of Beethoven; but all that was mere poppycock. We discovered that it paid us to tell you that sort of thing and we write what pays. But today we are going to be honest with you. You are the zeros which amount to absolutely nothing until we place a definite figure at the head of them. Like this—000,000,000. Add a mere 1 or a 2 and you get 1,000,000,000 or 2,000,000,000 and that amounts to something, while 000,000,000 alone amounts to nothing but a little waste space.

A hundred years or so ago the pioneers of the mind suddenly forged ahead and gave us our inanimate slaves, those multiplied tools which we call machinery. Those machines were gathered together in large buildings which we called factories. Those factories set to work, and around them grew an entirely new economic and social order, the so-called Industrial Era.

But we had apparently forgotten that in order to make a success of this new system of things, which was a million times larger than the old order of our ignorant ancestors, we should also need a million times more brains. Now, if we were to tell you the truth, we should have to confess that the proportion of brains in the community in the year 1931 was no larger than it had been in the year 131 or even 1931 B.C. And so everything was bound to go wrong because there was a lack of brains—there just simply were not brains enough to go around and the world began to resemble the Grand Central Station with a hundred thousand passengers and only two ticket sellers and perhaps three porters. Of course things had to go wrong and they did go wrong, and now you are standing in the bread line, and if we had warned you in time all that perhaps would not have been necessary.

The world is too complicated for you. You will never be able to catch up with it. The longer we try to hide the fact from you that our present system is doomed because we have not got enough brains for the key positions, the harder it will be for you in the end. But the harder it also will be for ourselves, for we make a living fooling you by our flattery and adulation. And so we shall go on flattering you and fooling you for many more years to come or as long as the present bargains in real estate continue.

Queen Marie Antoinette based her actions on the Bourbon philosophy of life that found expression in Mme de Pompadour's famous phrase, "Après nous le déluge." She was a wise woman but not quite wise enough, for the deluge caught her in her beautiful neck before she could quite get away. You think that may happen to us too. Well, just watch us.

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If I Were Dictator*

By GLENN FRANK

I WANT to part company with most of my colleagues in this series by confining my discussion to one problem, alluring as the temptation is to write a kind of table of contents to one's thinking about the whole round of political, social, economic, and educational dilemmas that harass our time. The single issue I shall discuss is the manifest crisis confronting Western capitalism. I want, first, to state the problem, and, second, to state with the utmost brevity the manner in which I think I would approach its solution.

I do not want to join the oversimplifiers, and bring a false clarity to a situation that is admittedly complex. The cause of the depression that has swept the whole Western world cannot be captured in a phrase or its cure distilled in an epigram. It is not a simple sickness that has fallen upon us, and it will not yield to any simple and single remedy. A lush variety of causes lies at the root of the economic crisis of the United States. Political unrest the world around. Mounting armaments. Speculative mania. Abortive governmental attempts to stabilize certain commodity prices. The fall in the price of silver. Provincialism of policy in the fields of foreign trade, tariffs, and the exploitation of the world supply of natural resources. The direct impact of war-debt payments upon Europe and the indirect impact upon the United States. The gravitation of an undue amount of the world supply of gold into French and American hands. And so on to the end of a list I need not rehearse. Even a casual diagnosis of the confusion and arrest that have fallen upon Western affairs compels us to consider all of these factors in addition to the obvious issues of wages, hours, prices, technology, and management, as well as the deeper human factors of security, leisure, and self-respect for the toiling millions.

To all these issues, and more, we must bring a clear-headed and courageous statesmanship before we can expect the Banquo's ghost of depression to absent itself permanently from the economic table or even to schedule its appearances at more decently long intervals. I do not, let me repeat, want to join the oversimplifiers. But in any situation, however complex, there may be one factor more fundamental than the rest, so fundamental, indeed, that the presence of all other factors cannot compensate for its absence. Is there any single factor thus fundamental to the economic recovery of the United States in particular, and of the Western world in general? I think there is. A long series of causes lay back of this economic relapse, but one thing seems to me sun-clear: the leadership that has determined our policies for using goods and distributing wealth has proved inferior to the leadership that has developed our processes for making goods and producing wealth. The production of goods has halted because the distribution of goods has halted. And the halt in the distribution of goods is due to a fault in the distribution of wealth. The depression through which the United States is passing is, in essence, an indictment, not of the machine order, but of the economic order. The machine order is ready to produce goods. The economic order is not ready to produce customers.

Our machine economy is today sinking us in a sea of surplus production, or surplus productive capacity, that could, were we statesman-like enough, be used to our advantage and to the good of the world at large. I speak of surplus production with some reluctance, for it is, in my judgment, a false surplus that is today choking the economic West. It would mark a definite gain in economic realism if we should reserve the term surplus production for goods not really needed, instead of using it, as we do, for goods that are simply difficult to sell at the moment. In the light of the social function of industry, business leadership has no right to regard as a surplus the goods for which an authentic human need obviously exists. Unmovable goods, unless they are at the same time unneeded goods, are not a sign that business leadership has been too zealous in producing goods, but a sign that it has not been zealous enough in building buying power among the masses.

I cannot concur with the observers who contend that we have been producing too much. There are 123,000,000 of us in the United States. As late as 1928, a year of prosperity, 8,000,000 Americans were living below the poverty line, and some 12,000,000 Americans living at a bare subsistence level. And today millions of our population have far from satisfied the legitimate demands of a healthy and civilized folk. There is a whole world outside our frontiers in which millions upon millions of men and women and children, outside the ranks of the dire poor, are living far below the consumption level that we have known and that health and civilized values dictate. To say that we are now or shall be for a long stretch of decades to come at the point where humanity is surfeited with goods and services it does not need for better living is, to me, too incredible to consider seriously.

Setting aside for the time other less fundamental factors in the rise and fall of prosperity, there are two ways to deal with this disturbed balance between production and consumption: (1) we can slow down production by deliberate policy, or (2) we can speed up consumption by deliberate policy. I shall not disguise my conviction that to throw the brakes on our productive capacity as a policy for the future, before we have fully explored the possibility of building a buying power adequate to absorb, to sound social advantage, our potential output of consumer goods, would be a coward's policy and a social retreat.

I am not at all interested in a shallow and sinister doctrine of consumptionism that would make it possible for the millions to buy prodigally only that business might grow bigger and the nation be swept into a kind of St. Vitus dance of industrial activity. An intelligent people will never trump up business just for the sake of doing business. I am concerned, however, that we shall not, in panic fear, take counsel of our timidity and under the magic of the new gospel of national planning rush pell-mell into a restriction

* The fifth of a series of articles on this subject. Others will follow in early issues.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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of production, thus allowing to lie even partially unused the matchless instrument of social emancipation which our genius has forged in the machine economy. Restriction of production is the line of least resistance. It has its appeal in a phase of sluggish inventory. It is implicit in much of the current agitation for national planning. It occupies the councils of most of our great trade associations. But until legitimate human need is served and saturated, a wholesale restriction of production is a confession that our capacity for economic statesmanship has gone bankrupt. What will be the judgment of future generations upon our genius if, after succeeding in elaborating a machine economy capable of putting an end to drudgery and poverty and insecurity, we say: "Now that we have sharpened this tool, we must dull its edge; now that we have perfected this swift efficiency, we must throw on the brakes"?

After the war some of the more farsighted leaders of American business and industry saw that a point had been reached in the evolution of our machine economy at which they must concern themselves with the purchasing capacity of the masses as well as with the producing capacity of their manufacturing plants. They adopted, in consequence, a new credo in which they asserted that stable prosperity and healthy industrial development require high wages, short hours, and low prices. This ran contrary to the business thinking of earlier days when business leadership generally thought that low wages, long hours, and high prices made for maximum profit. But outstanding industries throughout the United States proved by their balance sheets that high wages, short hours, and low prices were not only good for the masses but good for the manufacturers as well. The simple fact is that a machine economy must, along with the making of commodities, see to it that the consuming millions have money with which to buy and leisure in which to enjoy the products the machine economy creates in increasing volume and with increasing rapidity. Unless we can bring millions upon millions of men and women into position to buy the lavish output of Western industrialism, even our existing investment in its marvelous productive facilities will become, in large part, a permanently frozen asset.

When the market collapse and economic retardation befell the United States, it was basically at the place toward which the dreams of prophets and seers have pointed through the centuries. As we reread the literature of Utopian thought and list the things that the social seers have, with striking unanimity, set down as elementary requirements of an ideal society, we find that the United States was in position to provide them all in the closing months of 1929. Its technical genius had invented machines enough to free its people from drudgery. Its organizational genius had achieved a manufacturing efficiency that made possible the production of everything its people needed without their slaving from dawn to dusk. Leisure in which its people might laugh and love and adventure among things of the mind and spirit was within the nation's grasp. It was at such a moment that the United States found the shadow of a serious economic depression falling athwart its life. If some sinister spirit had been seeking to brew an exquisite irony, this turn of fortune could not have been timed with more devilish aptness. The machine economy has brought us to the threshold of a social millennium, but we have lacked the wit to unlock the door. And my contention is that, instead of planning to adjust ourselves to the half-hearted and insecure existence that marks the current economic order, with its alternate swings between panic and plenty, we should be searching for the key that will unlock the door into this social millennium of prosperity, leisure, and security which science and the machine have made possible. I think we know what the key is. The only question is whether we shall have the courage and statesmanship to use it. The key is a wider annual distribution of the national income.

The radical agitator has long pleaded for a wider distribution of wealth on the ground of social justice. In the past this plea has been regarded by many as a peril to the capitalistic industrialism of the West. Today, however, events are proving that a wider distribution of wealth is essential to the solvency and success of capitalistic industrialism itself, on the simple ground that it is self-defeating for industrialism to get itself in a position to produce vast quantities of goods unless at the same time it sees to it that there are vast masses of consumers ready with money to buy, and leisure in which to enjoy, the goods that the high-powered industrial machine produces. A too great concentration of wealth means money in the hands of those who will invest it in producer goods. A wide distribution of wealth means money in the hands of those who will invest it in consumer goods. And it is the absence of an adequate and dependable market for consumer goods that is stalling the economic machine of the West. It has thus come about that the capitalist has an even greater stake than the proletarian in the widest feasible distribution of the nation's annual income, not in the superficial sense of dividing up by decree existing wealth, but in the statesman-like sense of so balancing the factors of wages, hours, prices, profits, and so on that, in the very process of producing wealth, industry will be making its market while it is making its goods.

There is, in my judgment, no dodging the conclusion that the stability and success of the machine economy will ultimately depend upon higher wages than we have yet paid, shorter hours than we have yet set, and lower prices than we have yet fixed. I am not naive enough to assume that the imposition of higher wages, shorter hours, and lower prices upon all industries by legislation would suddenly produce a stable and prosperous economic life. It would, on the contrary, probably drive industry after industry into quick bankruptcy. High wages, short hours, and low prices must come as the triple fruit of a farsighted and statesman-like application of the principles of mass production and mass distribution to every phase of industry to which these two principles of economic modernism are logically applicable.

Business and industrial America is, as I write, in a phase of wage-cutting. I do not suggest that wages should not at any time be readjusted in the light of other factors in the economic scene. The merely formal maintenance of a wage scale may be meaningless. A wage scale may be rigidly maintained while other factors in the economic process shrink or swell the purchasing power of the worker's dollar. Overtime or part time may double or halve the worker's actual income. I do not suggest that a reduction of a formal wage scale is always and inevitably a social backsliding. To say that would be the economics of infantilism. But we must not, in the rush of readjustment, fall into the easy error of assuming that wages are simply a charge on industry, and that every dollar subtracted from wages by reduc-

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ing the scale of payment or lengthening the hours of labor means a dollar added to profits, for the contrary may be true. The working millions are not only industry's servants but industry's customers as well. Unless other factors exist as an offset, if industry puts 25 per cent less into the pockets of labor through reduced wages, industry must expect at least 25 per cent less to come out of the pockets of labor in the form of purchases of the goods industry produces. We cannot eat our cake and have it! I am not arguing against an intelligent balancing of all the factors in the industrial process. I am arguing only against the ancient fallacy that industry can grind labor and gain by it. What industry pays in wages is an investment in industry's market just as definitely as what industry pays for advertising is an investment in industry's market.

Three possible roads of economic destiny stretch before us, each having as its goal a wider distribution of wealth: (1) the road along which economic leadership may seek to effect a wider distribution of national income by the way it administers wages, hours, prices, profits, and the other factors of business and industry; (2) the road along which political leadership, in the event that economic leadership goes renegade to its responsibility, may seek to effect a wider distribution of the national income by taxing incomes and inheritances more and more drastically; and (3) the road along which social leadership, in the event that both economic and political leadership fail or refuse to effect a wider distribution of the national income, will seek to effect a revolutionary overturn. I hope America may travel the first road promptly. I think it is a better road than the second. I hope America may never have to travel the third road. It lies entirely with politico-economic leadership to say whether or not the road of revolution shall ever be taken. There is no reason why America should resort either to political radicalism or social revolution, for the wider distribution of the national income, which is the major key to economic recovery, is a policy of enlightened self-interest for industry. We need neither a Stalin nor a Mussolini if enough of our *big-business* men are really *big* business men, and if they will think socially and act nationally respecting this central problem of the wider distribution of buying power, which, while imperative in the interest of social justice and social stability, is at the same time both the best insurance policy for capitalism and the best business policy for capitalists.

With these beliefs at the center of my socio-economic outlook, if I were dictator I should approach the problem of economic recovery and stabilization from two angles. If the first approach succeeded, I should not need to resort to the second.

First, I should decree the creation of an integrated national organization in each distinctive field of economic enterprise, with the elaboration of the machinery and methods of responsible self-government as the goal of these organizations. I should undertake by persuasion, with appropriate threats lurking in the background of my appeal, to lodge the leadership of these national organizations of economic enterprise in the hands of the few really farsighted and statesman-like business leaders existing in the respective fields. I should notify the leaders of these functional associations that, in the name of the nation and in the interest of its future, I was committing to them the problem of organizing in their respective fields, on a mass-production and mass-distribution basis, every phase of enterprise to which these principles were logically applicable and economically feasible, to the end that as much as possible of the nation's economic life might be on the basis that makes high wages, short hours, low prices, and large total profits a practical business possibility. I should emphasize the fact that mass production and mass distribution are not simply large-scale industry, which may, despite its scale, be inefficient and anti-social. I should remind these leaders that the private profit and social advantage that mass production and mass distribution make possible depend upon very great business statesmanship. I should tell them that the nation expected them to see to it that each functional field of enterprise was organized in a manner that would put the planning and managerial genius of the whole field at the service of the whole field. I should try to get them to see that it is to the benefit of every industrial enterprise in a given field that the whole field be ably organized and ably managed. I should, for a time, leave it to these leaders to figure out what such a commission would, when carried out, involve in the way of a recasting of our traditional notions of individualism. And I should serve notice that the dictatorship would not tolerate any wholesale attempt upon the part of these national organizations to go in for a restriction-of-production policy until an adequate expansion-of-consumption policy had been elaborated and put into operation. I generalize roughly here. I do not mean that production should be reckless and unplanned in total disregard of available markets. I mean only that I should definitely block any attempt to settle down to satisfaction with getting less than the full social advantage out of our machine economy.

Second, if this approach did not bring a prompt and hopeful response, after I had guaranteed the leadership of economic America against undue governmental interference with a business and industrial system that could guarantee the nation against social loss by effecting its own socially sound and economically efficient self-government, I should tackle the problem of providing the machine economy with an adequate market by the following method. I should call a congress of the leaders of the nation's great businesses and great industries and say to them: "I am imposing upon the income of you and your enterprises an unprecedentedly high tax. I shall not insult your intelligence by trying to prove to you that the government needs all the money this tax will produce. It does not. At least, it does not for meeting the normal expenditures that a government must make. Save in times of grave unemployment crises, my colleagues and I would have difficulty in finding wise ways to spend the money this tax will presumably produce. I hope that you will do your best to prevent my government from getting more from this tax than an intelligently economical governmental program needs. I hope you will deliberately trick the government out of a large part of this tax by rapidly shifting the organization of your enterprise to a thoroughly modernized basis that will permit your distributing larger and larger amounts through higher wages, shorter hours, and lower prices. In short, this is not a tax for needed revenue, but a club to enforce farsighted business policy."

If the business leaders took my hint, they would discover, I think, that their attempt to cheat the government had resulted not in reducing their income but in increasing their income; for high wages, short hours, and low prices

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—granted, of course, that they had reorganized their businesses so that these were economically feasible—would mean that the masses would have money with which to buy and leisure in which to enjoy an unprecedented amount of goods and services. Business would boom, and although the profit per article would be low, the total profit would be great. And then, with the lesson learned, I should reduce the tax as drastically as I had raised it.

Something like this happened some years ago when vast sums were poured into advertising as an alternative to having these sums taken by government in excess-profits taxes. The excess then went into larger advertising appropriations rather than into larger wages. But there has been in the meantime so much education of the business mind on the "good business" of high wages, when they are economically possible, that the next time we might expect to see wages share with advertising in absorbing money that would otherwise be absorbed by taxes.

Rubber Money and Iron Debts

By HENRY HAZLITT

THERE is a school of economists which holds that all business cycles are caused by changes in the price level—that it is rising prices which bring prosperity and falling prices which bring depression. If these economists are right, and if the business cycle is the unmitigated evil that most of them regard it as being, then the task to which all economists and statesmen ought to address themselves is that of keeping prices stable. To keep prices constantly rising would be as undesirable as it would be impossible. Such a plan would keep industry humming and profits soaring, but those profits would be mainly at the expense of labor, whose wages would rise more slowly than wholesale prices, and also at the expense of the creditor class. (There is a popular misconception of this term which leads to a great deal of confused thought. When it is said that inflation helps the "debtor class" at the expense of the "creditor class," many persons assume that this is equivalent to saying that it helps the poor at the expense of the rich. But "creditors" include all savings-bank depositors, holders of life-insurance policies, and so on, and "debtors" include all the great corporations with bond issues outstanding. The great stockholder is usually, in this sense, a great "debtor," and as such, stands to gain from inflation.) The history of Germany in the six years following the war is a sufficient example of the effects of the constantly rising price level.

The effect of a falling price level is, of course, much worse. By reducing or wiping out profits, it compels manufacturers to reduce output or shut down entirely and throw men out of work. When the general price decline is relatively small, and is accompanied by increasing industrial efficiency, it may benefit both the laborer and the creditor, as did the decline from 1925 to 1929, for example. But when the fall becomes violent, as it has in the last two years, a large part of the creditor class also suffers heavy losses through interest and principal defaults and receiverships.

All these evils could be done away with, in the opinion of many economists, if commodity prices could be kept at a single unvarying average level. The method most frequently suggested for achieving this is through some change, manipulation, or "management" of money. The schemes of this nature are innumerable, and in recent months magazine editors have been flooded with them. Most of them inescapably suggest the ingenious inventions with which the cartoonist Goldberg used to beguile us, in which, the object being, say, to kill potato bugs, Mr. Goldberg would design a marvelously intricate series of levers, pulleys, falling weights, water-spouts, caged squirrels, and so on, and proceed to show how, through a process of causation partly mechanical and partly psychological, either a hammer would finally land on the bug, or it would die of fright. Apart from the more fantastic of these currency schemes, or outright inflationary projects which involve the manufacture of various forms of fiat money, those that have succeeded in commanding the most attention fall into three main groups: (1) bimetallism; (2) plans for stabilizing prices through control of bank rates and volume of credit; and (3) plans for controlling prices by varying the amount of gold in the dollar.

Bimetallism need not detain us long. Most of the present propaganda for it comes directly from the silver interests or from Senators from the silver-producing States. That it would raise the price of silver—particularly if the absurd legal ratio to gold that is usually proposed were actually accepted—is certain. Its other benefits are not clear. A bimetallic standard tends in practice to become an alternating single standard, depending upon the relative market values of gold and silver as compared with their legal-ratio values. If the silver interests could get silver overvalued in the ratio as compared with gold—which is, of course, their whole aim—then gold would be driven out of currency or reserve use by the operation of "Gresham's law"; and if silver were sufficiently overvalued in the ratio, we might very shortly find ourselves on a plain silver standard. We should also, in that event, find ourselves on a higher price level as a result of the debasement of the standard; but this end, if it were desirable, could be achieved in a more direct, dependable, and much less costly fashion by reducing the gold content of the present gold dollar.

It is much more frequently suggested that the price level could be stabilized through control of central bank rates and the volume of credit. Maynard Keynes's recent "managed-currency" proposals in the main suggest these means. There is of course an intimate relationship between bank rates, volume of credit, and price levels; but there is by no means a simple or a directly proportional relationship. It is possible for those in control of central banks to reduce the volume of credit by raising discount rates high enough, though it is impossible for them to know beforehand just *how much* effect a given advance in the discount rate will have on the volume of credit. And even this measure of control does not work the other way. In times of depression the discount rate may be lowered to next to nothing without increasing the volume of credit, as the recent experience of

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the Federal Reserve banks amply testifies. Finally, even if the bank rate could directly control the volume of credit, or if other means could be found, there is no direct proportional relationship between the volume of credit and the general price level. The cause-effect relation, moreover, is practically the reverse of what these credit-volume proposals assume. It is not the volume of credit which determines the general price level, but the price level which, together with the activity of business and speculation, determines the volume of credit.

Of all the plans for stabilizing the price level, that of the "compensated dollar," of which Irving Fisher has been the leading exponent, has the advantage of being the most direct. If we disregard for the moment its secondary effects, there can be little doubt that it would achieve what it directly set out to achieve. That plan, in essence, is very simple. It is that we abandon the present gold standard based on a dollar of a "fixed weight and fineness of gold," and substitute for it a paper dollar, still redeemable on demand in gold, but redeemable in a varying quantity of gold, depending on the course of commodity prices. As prices rose, the weight of the dollar would be increased to pull them down; as they fell, the weight of the dollar would be lightened to push them up again. The changes in the gold content of the dollar would be based on an index number of commodity prices, and would be announced, say, once a month.

It can be said in favor of this plan that as long as it could be kept in operation it would actually prevent all but negligible changes in the general price level. But the drawbacks would greatly outweigh the possible advantage of the plan, particularly if any one country attempted to apply it acting alone. If the values of other commodities as compared with gold soared to more than twice their former levels, the country applying this plan would have to pay out more than twice as much gold in redemption of notes as otherwise. Only a very strong country would be able to command this increased supply of gold. If prices fell precipitously in a crisis, foreign bankers and speculators, anticipating a reduced amount of gold for their credits in that country, would drain gold out of the country at such a rate that it would soon be compelled to abandon gold redeemability altogether. Some of the greatest difficulties and dangers of the plan could be avoided if it were adopted not by one country acting alone but by international agreement among all the leading gold-basis countries of the world. Such international agreement would, however, be enormously difficult to obtain; and it would face the initial difficulty that a single index number of world prices would not correctly represent the movement of prices in any one country, while different index numbers for different countries would complicate the foreign-exchange problems worse than ever. Even a world-wide adoption of the plan, moreover, would not prevent speculators everywhere from trading in gold, with relative assurance and safety, against governments—turning in gold for currency when they anticipated a rise in commodity prices and currency for gold when they anticipated a fall.

We are compelled, in brief, to dismiss as impracticable all existing plans for stabilizing prices directly by the manipulation of gold, silver, currency, or credit. There is a further objection to these plans besides their immediate impracticability. Substantially every one of them rests on the false assumption that all depressions are caused by changes in the general price level. They fail to consider the causes that have led to the fall of prices itself. Doubtless many long-run price movements—that is, tendencies extending over more than a decade—are the result of changes in the supply of gold itself; but most price changes—and this applies particularly to those of the last few years—are the result of changes in the supply of and demand for goods. Moreover, an attempt to deal with all crises simply by the manipulation of currency or credit would be not unlike the attempt of the chiropractor to cure every disease by thumping the spine: it may not only be harmful in itself, but by ignoring the real causes of the trouble it allows those causes to continue to operate. Nor, again, is it desirable under all conditions to keep the average level of commodity prices "pegged" at any one point. If new inventions, new chemical processes, or more efficient industrial methods make certain basic commodities or widely used articles cheaper to produce, the public should have the advantage of that cheapness directly. It should not, because of any fetish made out of the stability of the general *average* of prices, be compelled to pay *more* for *other* commodities, as it would be if the "compensated-dollar" plan were put into effect.

This consideration brings up immediately the real problem that we face today. It is not the change in the *general* level of prices that causes industrial deadlock and stagnation; it is changes in the *relations* of *particular* prices, or of particular *classes* of prices. The violent fall in the prices of farm products and raw materials, unaccompanied by any corresponding fall in prices of finished goods, or in indebtedness, interest, wages, rents, and other production costs, brought about a situation in which raw-material producers as a whole, and the labor dependent on them, were no longer able to buy finished goods; so that the relatively high price of the finished goods brought little advantage to those who had them to sell. This situation still exists. We can epitomize one angle of it by comparing the decline in Bradstreet's index number of wholesale commodity prices between December 1, 1929, and December 1, this year, which amounted to more than 35 per cent, with the decline in the "cost of living," as shown by the figures of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, which amounted between December 1, 1929, and June 1 of this year to only 12 per cent.

The situation in which this decline and deadlock have left us is illustrated in one of its aspects most forcibly by the railroads. Traffic has declined to a point where very few railroads are able to continue their former dividends on their stock, where a very large number are not earning their bond interest, and where a substantial number are not even earning their operating expenses. Under these circumstances the railroad executives contend that the roads cannot be saved unless railway labor takes a 10 per cent cut in wages. The executives point out that as the cost of living, as shown by the Labor Bureau's figures, declined 12 per cent between December, 1929, and June, 1931, and will doubtless show a further decline when the December figure is published, such a reduction would still leave railway labor better off than it was at the peak of prosperity.

Railway labor, however, can hardly be blamed if it does not immediately see the justice of this proposal. No doubt, if a wage that varied with the cost of living were generally in effect in industry at the present time, it would make the

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transition to a new price level enormously smoother, less wasteful, and less painful. But labor, after fighting so stubbornly and against such resistance for its increases, would be justifiably suspicious of enthusiasm for such a wage system among employers at the present time, when the prospect is almost certainly for a further decline in living costs. Moreover, it is not easy for the worker to look upon his wages as the purchasing power for a certain standard of living; he looks upon them directly, as dollars, as if they had a fixed value in themselves. Forty-five dollars a week is forty-five dollars a week, whether it purchases more or less. It is wages based on a cost-of-living index number that would seem to him uncertain and fluctuating. Nor is this view entirely unreasonable. Such a wage might vary from month to month, whereas a fixed item of expense, like the worker's rent, for example, might vary only from year to year. Further, a cost-of-living index which reflected average changes for the entire country might not correctly reflect them for the particular city in which the worker lived. The average cost of living in the country as a whole, for example, increased 50.3 per cent between 1913 and June, 1931, but the increase in New York City was 57.1 per cent. The possible discrepancies become more striking if we take a single item, like rent. In Los Angeles, rents in December, 1923, had increased 100.9 per cent over those in December, 1914; from that point they broke violently, and in June of this year were only 31.3 per cent above those of 1914. But rents in New York, which in December, 1923, had increased only 62.4 per cent above those of 1914, were still 61.5 per cent above in June of this year.

A still further reason why the cost-of-living argument is not likely to appeal to the worker asked to take a cut in wages is that the same medicine has not been suggested for the bondholder. When railway labor was recently asked by the executives to accept a voluntary reduction, the union leaders remarked that they saw no reason why the worker should be asked to turn 10 per cent of his wage over to the bondholder. This argument, of course, is not quite just as applied to the bondholder who has held his securities since 1914, for he is still receiving no more in dollars than he was then, whereas train- and engine-service labor on Class I railroads has been receiving about double what it did in 1914. But the argument is certainly relevant against the bondholder who got his bonds within the last decade. He stands to gain from the decline in prices, while the railroad worker is being asked to "protect" him.

Regardless of considerations of "justice," the purely economic argument against the fixed bond is a very powerful one. The burden of fixed debts upon nations, industries, homes, and farms offers perhaps the greatest single problem presented by the present crisis. If Congress were to pass an act declaring that the interest and principal of bonds and mortgages were to be scaled down in the same ratio as commodity prices since 1929, the act would be denounced everywhere as an attack upon the rights of property and the sacredness of contract, and it would of course be condemned by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. The way we are actually taking and will probably continue to take will be that of default, receivership, wrangling among different classes of creditors, and endless litigation. Perhaps industry will learn in future to issue fewer bonds, to substitute either preferred stocks or at least debenture bonds on which interest does not have to be paid unless it is earned. Perhaps we may even be able to develop a "compensated" bond to take care of changes in price levels.

The problem is an enormously difficult and complex one; but if no obvious answer presents itself, it is no longer possible to ignore it or to treat it as if it were merely academic. Capitalism must learn either how to stabilize itself or how to adjust itself; its price structure must become either firm or genuinely flexible. If it cannot provide a smooth road, it must at least provide reasonably satisfactory shock absorbers. Only by more drastic reforms than it has hitherto been willing to make will it find itself able to survive.

"Home" and the Housing Experts

By ARTHUR EVANS WOOD

In characteristic fashion President Hoover recently summoned housing experts from all over the country to Washington for a four-day Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership. No fewer than thirty-two committees had been at work for nearly a year gathering data on all aspects of the housing question. They represented all the multifarious interests of modern housing enterprise, from realtors to makers of air-conditioning apparatus. One of the Washington newspapers announced in headlines, "Hot-Air Experts Convene"; but the text of the article indicated that it had reference to furnace men! As a whole, the conference seemed to release a spirit of protest that had been gathering for decades over the abominable conditions of housing and home building in the United States. The President himself in the opening address at the first evening meeting set the tempo of the conference—that "Home, Sweet Home" was not written over rent receipts. If this remark appeared to some of his audience to verge on sentimentality, it may be said that the question of home building and home ownership is traditionally and irretrievably immersed in sentiment for millions of persons who have sought and still seek desirable dwelling places.

However, it is quite otherwise with those whose business it has been to provide homes for the people. This major job has been in large part a racket, in which realtors, builders, supply dealers, and numerous others in the building game have been engaged. They have exploited the needs of the people, either through herding them in multiple dwellings without regard for the requirements of the family in the matter of light, air, privacy, and space, or by loading the masses with small single homes at prices which they could not afford to pay. Of course, the building industry has entirely missed the lower income groups, who are forced to cultivate their civic ideals in the rookeries and dilapidated dwellings of our slums or in the shacks and garage dwellings on the outskirts of cities. During the conference it was

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pointed out that, whereas in most fields of manufacture production costs and prices within the last decade have notably declined, in housing this has not been so. Good small dwellings for the lower income groups are still as scarce as hen's teeth, while automobiles, radios, washing machines, and vacuum cleaners have all been brought within the range of democratic consumption. The admission of this by the speakers at the conference was a sort of wholesome confession that was good for the soul of the nation, a necessary prelude to something better.

Lest one be accused of "scandalizing the name" of our stalwart entrepreneurs in this field, it should be said that their failure to meet social needs may be attributed to a number of factors, most of which lie beyond the power of the individual private builder to control. Rather, this failure goes back to faulty land control, to lack of zoning, to difficulties of financing, to outworn codes, to the refusal to adopt methods of mass production and of large-scale operation. Fundamental also is our neglect of the art of community planning and building. Whatever values "rugged individualism" may have for President Hoover as a general economic philosophy, even he would have difficulty in justifying it in the light of what has befallen us in the vitally essential processes of housing and community development. The spirit of the conference was for a right-about-face with respect to this principle, some of the constituent committees not balking at government subventions to housing, if such be necessary for doing the wholesale job that confronts us.

As we have indicated, no fewer than thirty-two committees functioned under a general planning committee of the conference of which Secretaries Lamont and Wilbur were cochairmen, and Dr. John M. Grier the executive secretary. To the latter, and to the chairman of the various subcommittees, must be given a good share of the credit for the large measure of success attained by the conference. At least twenty-six of the committees published for circulation more or less voluminous, tentative reports of their findings. Besides, most of the committees had prepared mimeographed appendixes which contain a mine of valuable research material in their respective fields. The publication of this material alone would have justified the conference. Thoroughgoing inquiry is a necessary prelude to social achievement. On the other hand, it is quite possible for a body of distinguished citizens to march in serried ranks right up to a mountain of accumulated facts regarding a problem, and then to wheel around and go home, leaving the facts out to freeze. It is to be hoped that the rich data of the conference will have a different fate.

In a brief summary of the conference one can call attention to only a few of its outstanding concerns and conclusions, as set forth in the reports of the committees. For example, the Types of Dwellings Committee had the problem of drawing up acceptable definitions of the various types of modern domicile and of discussing the respective social values of each type. The opinion of the committee tended to favor the one-family house for family groups of parents and children, though it was recognized that other groups, not so constituted, find the apartment a convenience in modern urban living, where the traditional home would be a burden. Problems relating to types of dwelling were also considered by the committees on Design, Construction, and Remodeling, and by the correlating Committee on Standards and Objectives. The report of this last committee is in the nature of a source manual for the desiderata in home construction and furnishing. Its counsels of perfection are most impressive, even though a bit didactic. For example, I read with some discomfiture that "there should always be harmony between the room and those using it," as if one were to blame for one's last year's Christmas neckties, which may be only on armistice terms with the household decorations!

Another very important series of committees were those on City Planning and Zoning, Blighted Areas and Slums, Industrial Decentralization, and Large-Scale Operations. The reports and meetings of these committees envisage the possibilities of slum clearance and of rebuilding on an extensive scale. Especially the Committee on Large-Scale Operations attacked its problem fearlessly, demonstrating the urgent need in the immediate future of engaging in extensive construction of good inexpensive housing on a mass-production basis, under nation-wide coordinated auspices with respect to both materials and finance. Such enterprises, it was urged, should be undertaken both in slum areas and on cheap rural land, but preferably in the latter regions. It was this committee which went on record in favor of government subventions to such projects, in case private capital could not be secured in sufficient amounts. The Committee on Blighted Areas and Slums was of the same opinion. The rehabilitation of slum areas was faced as an economic necessity for restoring taxable values to urban areas which in their present state are an economic and social burden to the community. So far as the dislodged slum population is concerned, it was suggested that if they were unable to pay the higher rentals of the new dwellings built on the cleared areas, they probably would find better accommodations than they have hitherto known in the vacated houses of those who move to the new dwellings. Always in the background of conference discussions, the extreme-poverty group, for whom new housing cannot be economically provided, lurked as a disturbing imponderable element. Outside Vienna perhaps, no successful attempt has been made on behalf of this group, and the final chapters of the experiment in that city remain still to be written.

Another group of committees wrestled with fundamental problems of Taxation, Finance, and Income and the Home. After calling attention to the present excessive tax burdens upon real estate, the Committee on Taxation was inclined to seek remedial measures through a better administration of the tax laws, and through a reduction of the expenses of government. On the other hand, this committee viewed tax-exemption measures cautiously, if not critically. The Committee on Finance scored the abuses connected with second mortgages and apartment-house financing. Constructively it urged a stronger organization of second-mortgage agencies, suggesting the desirability of a joint handling of first and second mortgages, such as would allow a single payment to carry both obligations.

Perhaps the most hopeful aspect of the whole matter lies in the organization of a continuing Research Committee that will gather additional data and be the initiating agent for further organization and concerted action on the basis of the accumulated facts. The ultimate test of the value of such a meeting of minds on this great national problem will lie in the results that are achieved. For these we shall have to watch and wait.

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Disarmament and Depression

By ALANSON B. HOUGHTON

[*Representing forty American peace organizations, the former Ambassador to Germany and to Great Britain attended the Paris meeting of international societies working for the success of the forthcoming disarmament conference. When the attack by French militarists of the right broke up the final session, Mr. Houghton was unable to deliver the address he had crossed the Atlantic to present. It is printed here in full.*—EDITOR THE NATION.]

Trocadero Palace, Paris, November 27

TONIGHT I bring you greetings from millions of American men and women who, in one form of organization or another, have banded together to promote the peaceful settlement of international disputes. They are under no illusion as to the difficulty of the task. But at least they recognize its necessity. And in whatever other respects they may differ, they are united in the belief that until armaments can be brought under control, not by mere limitation, but by reduction to a level where they no longer threaten the peace and security of others, progress toward a more orderly and stable world will be largely impossible. Armaments block the way. Unless their steady increase can be reversed, it is a mere question of time when those armaments will assume control and, partly because of their cost, partly because of their power, will themselves become a direct incitement to war. Those for whom I am speaking believe that danger should now be actively combated. They are eager to associate themselves with the peace-loving men and women of all countries in a common effort for effective reduction. They have asked me to deliver that message to you.

The problem of disarmament has many angles of approach. Tonight I want to speak of but one. I want you to think for a moment of armaments in their relation to the industrial depression which, impartially, among all the peoples, is causing so much privation and distress and social discontent. Economic stability, it seems to me, is an end to be sought no less than political security. At the moment, indeed, it may be even more important.

I begin with the war because the depression begins there. What we have all been slow to realize, I think, is the material damage wrought by that titanic conflict. We have thought of it as like all other wars, greater in extent, no doubt, more severe in its results, but, after all, essentially the same—an episode, dreadful in itself, but without lasting effects. And it was not. We forgot that that war was waged, not by armies, but by whole peoples. We forgot that it was waged in a new kind of world—a world in which the nations were no longer self-contained and self-supporting units, but mutually dependent and bound together in an economic unity which, once destroyed, could not be easily or rapidly replaced. And we forgot therefore that such a war could only end in exhaustion—that it had consumed a large part of the liquid capital of the world, that it had disrupted trade and commerce, and ruined markets, and that it had left the economic machinery of the world, if not completely broken down, at least unable normally to function. That was the situation in which we found ourselves a dozen years ago.

How did we meet that situation—I say we, because we were all partners in the doing? In a world where mutual confidence was desperately needed and cooperative effort essential, we capitalized hate and fostered fear and suspicion. In a world whose accumulated resources had been largely dissipated, we began at once to pour into armaments again a formidable share of all we could raise by taxation or borrowing. That may have been natural. Human nature has its limitations. The nations had passed through a veritable hell, and nerves were still raw and minds still weary. But in any event that was what we did. And today, as a matter of course, we are reaping the consequences. There are more men under arms than ever before, armaments have steadily increased, and the search for new and more effective means and methods of destroying life and property goes on unwearied and unchecked. Two-thirds of all the money governments raise by taxation today goes to pay for wars past and to come. Today, between us all, while industry languishes and unemployment grows and the bread lines lengthen, we are spending $5,000,000,000 annually for naval and military purposes, and in all probability, directly and indirectly, if the full truth were known, perhaps half as much more.

Not a single nation today, one or two smaller ones possibly excepted, can honestly assert that its budget balances. Governmental deficits exist in every country, and in every country new and heavier loads of taxation must, necessarily, be imposed on the already staggering burden. What wonder, then, that economic conditions everywhere are unsettled and threatening, that the sources of credit are drying up, that values are steadily diminishing, and that men are fearful of the future? What wonder that the growing cost of government seriously threatens the stability of our whole economic structure? Is it not high time that we took counsel together as to the direction in which we are now all moving?

That is the question I wish to leave with you. For it seems to me in all seriousness that the world can no longer safely or wisely carry the burdens armaments impose. There is no other single item which offers so definite a possibility of relief, or so directly tends to free the world from menace, or opens so widely the way to prosperity. We need not fear that political security is at stake. It is not. Armaments are comparative things. To reduce them all in the same proportion is to leave each nation in the same relative position of security it now holds. We can, of course, postpone the decision. We can close our eyes to the somber facts and tendencies all about us, and hope that somewhere just ahead a magic door will open to lead us, despite our folly, into happier and more stable conditions of life. But such a hope will be found illusory. To temporize is dangerous. In the end the necessity of decision will overtake us. Why not render the decision now?

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Washington Madhouse

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, December 12

CONGRESS meets, and the first general impression is that of bedlam, pierced here and there by the isolated voice of a thoughtful and determined man. Whether these voices eventually will prevail is the question, and the answer rests with the Democrats. They have organized the House and by combining with the Progressives they can effectually control the Senate. The Republicans are a whipped and leaderless mob, hating the world and reviling each other. In the House the Democrats have made a significant advance toward representative government by reforming the medieval rules of that body so that members will occasionally be permitted to speak, and even to vote, on important measures. True, the personnel of ranking committees—and the sudden and beautiful friendship between Speaker Garner and John F. Curry—suggest that Tammany and the South have reached an understanding. Moreover, we hear Arkansas Joe Robinson, in language borrowed outright from the venerable Andrew Mellon, warning against the perils of legislation designed to "soak the rich." Obviously, the Democrats again are being tempted to bid for the support of those interests which have heretofore governed the country through the Republican Party. We shall know more when the party's legislative program is disclosed. In selecting a joint committee from the two houses to draft such a program and submit it to the membership, the Democrats have set an example in orderly common-sense procedure.

* * * * *

WE need not wait on the outcome to assure a startled public and a collapsing stock market that the new Hoover-Mellon tax plan will not be adopted. That crazy relic of Spanish-American War days, with its proposed levies on bank checks, deeds, telephone calls, and telegrams—to say nothing of movie admissions, radios, and flivvers—has no more chance of becoming a law than Tom Heflin has of becoming the Pope of Rome. That such a bill was ever offered is sufficient commentary on the political acumen of this Administration. Instead of a 5 per cent increase in the inheritance tax, Messrs. Hoover, Mellon, and Mills are more likely to be confronted with one of 25 per cent. Instead of a 40 per cent surtax on million-dollar incomes, Congress probably will vote for 50 or 55. Unless my judgment errs, there will be no such lowering of exemptions as the Treasury and the White House advocate. There should be, and probably will be, a substantial tax on large gifts. That is the sort of bill which eventually will be laid on Mr. Hoover's desk. And watch him swallow it!

* * * * *

IN the communications which the Great White Feather has addressed to Congress on the subject of the economic crisis and international affairs, one detects nothing but the reflection of an agitated and uncertain man. There is a mumbled drone about "frozen credits" and more "liberal" banking laws, punctuated with occasional entreaties to have faith in God and the American Home. Nowhere does he reveal the slightest comprehension of the tremendous causes which precipitated the disaster; nowhere does he exhibit the faintest will to face the crucial problem of redistributing the national income. What we observe is simply a bewildered ex-promoter of mining stock struggling to suspend himself by his bootstraps until another boom can arrive—from somewhere. He urges ratification of the moratorium in language intended to persuade Congress that he opposes cancelation, and in tones which deepen the belief that cancelation is his aim. His fear of Congress, amounting almost to obsession, prevented him from calling a special session in time to obtain ratification before the payments fell due, and aroused antagonism which certainly will nullify any further efforts along that line, even if he has the courage to make them. In but one place is it possible to discover a note of firm and deliberate purpose. That is where Mr. Hoover recommends a drastic cut in the appropriation of the Federal Trade Commission, which is conducting a searching investigation of the rates and financial practices of the electric-power industry. If the cut is made—which I doubt—the investigation will be seriously crippled, and in one quarter at least it can still be said that Herbert Hoover has been faithful to the last!

* * * * *

TURNING to pleasanter scenes, we find the Senate Progressives performing with more than usual brilliance and vigor. Senator La Follette has completed an amazingly thorough inquiry into the possibilities of industrial stabilization, and is ready to present the results in terms of legislation. Senator Wagner, despite the puerile heckling of his colleagues, Hebert and Glenn, has made a scholarly and searching examination of unemployment-insurance plans, and presently will report. The indomitable and indefatigable Norris, this time with able assistance, has concluded an impressive survey of the whole question of public-utility regulation and ownership. Borah probably knows more about the actual state of foreign affairs right now than the muddle-headed Stimson and all his white-spatted aides combined. Hiram Johnson already has driven through the Senate a resolution providing for an investigation of the flotation and sale of foreign securities in this country which will cause a score of our leading financiers to seek the Riviera in search of health providing they realize the danger in time. Happy days are here again in the Senate—or unhappy days, depending on the point of view.

* * * * *

THE story that the Progressives decided to depose Senator Moses as president pro tempore of the Senate in reprisal for his having called them "sons of the wild jackass" was too good to stay out of the papers. It also was too good to be true. And since the engaging myth has been so widely circulated, it may do no harm to give the facts. The Progressives —and some who are not—are determined to prevent Moses's reelection, but their grievances go considerably deeper than

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mere name-calling. The New Hampshire "wisecracker" happens to be chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, which is supposed to furnish impartial support to all Republicans duly nominated for the Senate. Not only has he failed to give such support to Progressive Republicans after they were nominated, but some of them believe he has attempted to prevent their nomination. Moreover, at the last session he inserted in the *Congressional Record* a garbled and misleading account of the expenses of the committee investigating Senatorial campaign expenditures, of which Senator Nye is chairman. Although the document actually contained a record of the expenses (some incorrect) of all the five members of the committee and its large staff, Moses's shabby trick enabled Nye's political enemies to tell the North Dakota farmers that their Senator had been leading the life of a voluptuary while they sat at home contemplating the mortgages. Finally, there are a number of Senators, not limited to Progressives, who feel that Moses's personal habits and characteristics disqualify him from performing the duties of a presiding officer. The regular Republicans in the Senate would gladly elevate genial Jim Watson to the post, in order to make way for McNary of Oregon as floor leader, but McNary is understood to be unacceptable to the White House. It seems that "Our Charlie" is a shade too radical—he voted for government operation of Muscle Shoals and municipal ownership of power plants in Oregon. Who says Herbert Hoover never stands by his friends?

An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi

By A. FENNER BROCKWAY

London, November 25

OUTSIDE a gang of workmen are repairing the road, and the noise is like that of a quick-firing machine-gun—deafening and distracting. In this room Mr. Gandhi sits, quietly and calmly, on a rug on the floor, in front of a deep open fireplace, busy at his compact little spinning-wheel, as though there were no such things as noise and nerves.

It is a curious setting for an Indian scene. The room is mid-Victorian, with heavy upholstered chairs and old English ornaments. I sit deep and comfortable as I talk, while Mr. Gandhi turns the little handle of his wheel with one hand and holds a roll of raw cotton in the other, skilfully guiding it round a revolving needle. Now and again the thread breaks, and he stops to repair it. Only occasionally does he look up to interpret the spirit of my words by a glance at my face, or to express the feeling of his own words in the expression of his eyes or a movement of his features.

The Round Table Conference is crumbling, but naturally Mr. Gandhi cannot express his views upon it for publication yet. I don't want to embarrass him, so I put this question tentatively:

"Is it possible for you to speak about what developments are likely in India if the conference breaks down?"

"Not in detail," he replies. "As I sense the future now, there will be a revival of trouble in its intensest form."

"But do you think you will be able to renew the psychology of resistance? When a movement is called off, is it not always more difficult to renew it?"

"I have no doubt whatever about it. I have never found it difficult to renew a movement which I have called off. But I must feel the strength within.

"My friends were nervous when we finished at Bardoli in 1922, and then renewed the struggle in 1931. But it was just the right time. And the suspension proved to be good. During the intervening years we were not idle. The people were imbibing our ideas. Our constructive work went on, and it told. The masses assimilated the meaning and spirit of the movement, and there was a very wonderful response."

"I see that Jawaharlal Nehru is saying that it is difficult to keep back the people now."

"This is all to the good. I can say in the plainest possible manner that I should not like to start the struggle if there were no spontaneous feeling among the people. But even at this distance I am conscious that the people are absolutely ready. They are only waiting for the signal."

"Is that the case with the peasants as well as with the population in the towns?"

"Yes, I have to depend more and more on peasants."

"Do they take part in the movement principally from economic or political motives?"

"Their economic difficulties have given them a grasp of the political situation. They understand that their economic position will not be better until the present political system is destroyed root and branch. The government in India has become the protector of the rich. There seems to be a conspiracy of the rich behind the government to get every pice they can from the poor. The position of the peasants cannot be improved until the cruel burden of taxation which they have to bear is removed."

"In the struggle at the beginning of this year, South India seemed to be weak. Do you think you can count on South India this time?"

"South India gave its share steadily in the last struggle, and was coming forward splendidly when the civil disobedience campaign was suspended. It will come forward again when the struggle is renewed. South India is like that. It moves more slowly, but it is sound. I did not lose faith in the south before. In the making of Khaddar (homespun cloth) the south has done the best, and its work among the Untouchables has been solid. . . . But I cannot say which province will be best this time. I have faith in all the provinces."

"Have you any fear lest the impatience in India prevent you from keeping the movement on non-violent lines?"

"No, I think not. If the people continue to respond and the mass character of the movement is maintained, violence will play no part."

"Not in Bengal?"

"No, not even in Bengal."

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Then still more carefully I approach the question of the Moslems.

"I don't want to embarrass you, but I cannot escape the conviction that some of the Moslems at the Round Table Conference have been more concerned about their communal claims than about Indian self-government."

"I would not say that. I would say that their predominant concern is the guarding of what they consider to be the rights of Islam in India. That certainly occupies a very important place in their minds. But one has to say the same of the communal claims of the three sections—the Hindus, the Moslems, and the Sikhs."

"Do you regard the communal 'representatives' at the conference as in fact representative, or would you say that the larger part of their communities are behind Congress?"

"Undoubtedly they are behind Congress. Otherwise, Congress could not do its work. We have had the hearty support of both Sikhs and Moslems. There are five Moslems on the Congress Working Committee. And they are not nonentities. They are really respected Moslem leaders."

I want to get at the facts of this matter, so I press it further.

"Would you say that the National Moslem League (which supports Congress) *is more representative than most of the Moslem 'leaders' at the conference?"*

"Certainly. That is what Dr. Ansari, who is on our Working Committee, is always claiming. It may not be so true, perhaps, as Dr. Ansari thinks, but it is becoming truer day by day. There is no doubt whatever that it is true of the younger generation, which is turning from sectarianism."

"Is this tendency in the younger generation a revolt against sectarianism only, or is it a revolt against religion itself?"

"It is difficult to say. I am not able to say that they are agnostics and atheists. I can only say that they have developed the spirit of toleration. Whether that signifies less appreciation of Islam and a waning of the religious instinct, I do not know."

"If the Round Table Conference breaks down on the issue of responsible government at the center, do you think there will be a repetition of the united opposition which was given to the Simon Commission?"

"Yes, I think so. The Liberals and Moderates will not join the direct-action movement, but their opinions will be entirely on the Congress side."

"Do you see any possibility of agreement with the British government on the basis of self-government in the provinces?"

"No, I suggested a formula, but the British government would not accept it. There might be a possibility of agreement if the provinces were given real control immediately and if an absolute guaranty were given of early central responsibility. I would accept an interval in point of time, but not in legislation. The same legislation must deal with the two things. Indian Nationalists will not look at provincial autonomy without the certainty of central responsibility. They say they have waited a long time for complete independence, and they can wait a little longer rather than accept a compromise which withholds central responsibility."

"What is your view of Mr. Brailsford's suggestion of complete provincial autonomy, with provision for a national constituent assembly to settle the issue of the form of central government?"

"Only a guaranty of responsible government under statutory provision would do. We must have responsible government."

I had kept Mr. Gandhi a long time, but I wanted to clear up the issue of the army.

"How would you face the problem of the transition in the control of the forces?" I asked.

"There can be no transition in the control of the forces," Mr. Gandhi answered. I noted that he proceeded to personify India in himself.

"The British must trust me to take control. Idiot or no idiot, they must trust me. I would rely on solid, good judgment, but I must have the power to override military decisions which are not compatible with the national interests. After all, a Prime Minister does not know the technique of military tactics, but the last decision rests with him. The ignorance which ministers show on many questions is amazing, but it is not unnatural. How can any man understand the technique of every question? He must have experienced people to advise him, but he must judge their advice in the light of his principles. The declaration of war or of peace is in the hands of the Prime Minister, not of the Commander-in-Chief or Field Marshal. It was not the decision of Lord Roberts or General Kitchener, but of the Cabinet, when the South African War was called off. Though the military men squirmed with indignation, they obeyed. The controlling power must be in the hands of the minister appointed by the legislature, whatever his nationality. If the legislature elects him to the job, the decisions must be made by him."

And so out again to the crowded, noisy streets, wondering what the future relations of Britain and India will bring.

In the Driftway

NOT long ago the Drifter spent a day in one of the so-called modern progressive schools that he has so often heard about. Frequently he passes the door of this particular school just before nine o'clock in the morning and a heartier, handsomer set of children never bounced into a school entry hall and slammed the door behind them. He was more than grateful, therefore, for the invitation to inspect the young ones at their work. He was taken first to a couple of top-floor rooms, full of sun, in which a group of six-year-olds expressed themselves daily. On the floor were a number of extensive building operations in course of construction. There was a great pile of blocks, perhaps six feet long, vaguely set in the shape of an ocean liner, which its proud creator assured him was a seaplane of 1,200 tons in weight, and he added moreover that it took fifteen minutes to walk from one end to the other. There were very brightly colored pictures on the walls, and the Drifter listened to a heated argument between two of the six-year-olds as to whether the blue sky which topped the picture should be wavy or straight. He watched a young lady of six measure, mark, and saw a board with disconcerting expertness, if with her left hand. In short, he shared for a brief time the life of children, and it seemed very simple and very good.

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LATER on he watched another group of nearly the same age enjoying instruction in the singing of Christmas carols. It seemed a harmless and pleasurable enough occupation, but the young teacher and pianist assured him that only after a struggle had she been allowed to teach the children any songs that "mentioned the Nativity." The Drifter was inclined to view this as carrying impartiality too far. If the school in question is desirous of not pressing upon the children a Christian ethic, well and good. But to refuse them therefore the delights of Christmas music and the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus smacks of pedantry. The Drifter would as soon think of depriving them of "Mother Goose" because its morals were not of the best, as indeed a strict analysis reveals that they are not; or of the story of that unconscionable little wretch Pinocchio because he disobeyed his elders.

* * * * *

NEVERTHELESS, despite certain disagreements in method, the Drifter liked the results that the modern school in question seemed to be producing. The children, in the first place, were having a good time. And they were doing so without undue excitement, noise, or interference with one another. Moreover, they displayed a competence and an ability to take care of themselves that would probably have astonished their parents. Not only did they demonstrate a well-established acquaintance with a paint brush, a saw, and a brace-and-bit, but they appeared perfectly able to don the most complicated of winter clothing without assistance, they spoke glibly of Zeppelins, Akrons, Mauretanias, Empire State buildings. And they arose to a small domestic crisis with promptness and dispatch. One young man, probably under the stress of having a visitor, became fractious and with one blow of his right foot leveled an ambitious freight boat of blocks to the ground. The others did not shout or weep, but very quietly they set upon him and pommeled him, and it was he who retired weeping to the corner, failing utterly to catch a sympathetic eye from his elders. It was a charming lesson in communist justice. If the Drifter were not afraid it would be misused, he would recommend it to larger and weightier social groups.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

The Late F. J. Kern

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I bespeak a little of your space to pay a tribute to a devoted reader and follower of *The Nation,* Frederick J. Kern, editor and owner of the Belleville, Illinois, *Daily News-Democrat,* a member of the Fifty-second Congress, and for five terms, from 1902 to 1912, mayor of Belleville? He could have held this position indefinitely had he so desired. During his term of office he revolutionized Belleville's municipal life, leaving the city one of the most highly important cities of its size in the country.

Mr. Kern was also for many years president of the Illinois State Board of Administration of the twenty-one eleemosynary institutions of the State. He found the conditions existing in the insane asylums nothing less than barbaric; he abolished corporal punishment, largely substituted competent women nurses for the merely brutal men, introduced the cottage system, abolished the rule of silence at table, and in many other ways humanized and made livable the institutions of the State.

The Nation might like to record these facts of a valuable life lived in this community, to offset some of the many breaches of public trust by men in similar positions.

Belleville, Ill., November 30 F. H.

A Letter to Lincoln Steffens

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In the year 1905 or 1906 I published in some publication "An Open Letter to Lincoln Steffens." I have told the story of this article in "The Brass Check," page 25. I have no copy of this article, as all my papers were burned in the Helicon Hall fire. Neither has Steffens a copy, as he also had a fire loss. I am very anxious to find a copy of this article, as it contained a somewhat remarkable prophecy of the present collapse of capitalist finance.

I should greatly appreciate the courtesy if you would publish this letter on the chance that some of your readers may be able to give me a hint as to where the article in question was published.

Pasadena, Cal., November 25 UPTON SINCLAIR

Not Even a Dollar

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I am a reader of your magazine for the last five years. Now I have to confess my incapacity to renew my subscription. It is sad but it is true.

Compositor, twenty-six years in United States, for the first time I have to face a situation which you never realize. Out of job for the last nine months, and no hope to find one; my family disbanded and the winter here; you see clear that with all my good disposition I am unable to send you so much as a dollar.

New York, November 12 M. DE INTIMIS

Hope from Portland

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Here is a little ray of hope! The city council of Portland, according to the Portland *Oregonian* of November 5, "yesterday denied the petition of the Ellison-White Bureau that the rent of the public auditorium for the meeting of Major General Smedley D. Butler be reduced from $225 to $150. General Butler failed to attract a crowd large enough to finance the expenses of the lecture."

Portland, Ore., November 12 C. J. WALKER

A Group in Westchester

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I wish to organize a discussion group of the readers of *The Nation* residing in Westchester County. Will those interested in such a group kindly correspond with me at Post Office Box 647, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

Hastings-on-Hudson, December 1 ERVIN WAGNER

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Finance

Germany and the Gold Standard

IN spite of the common belief that foreigners' money in Germany is tightly locked up under the bankers' *Stillhaltung* agreement, funds have been escaping from the Reichsbank and over the national borders at such a rate as to furnish occasion for the rumor that Germany would shortly abandon the "gold standard." Such a report was heard in Wall Street on a recent day of heavy selling of stocks, and gave rise to a degree of alarm which, even if the much-feared event had taken place, was hardly warranted.

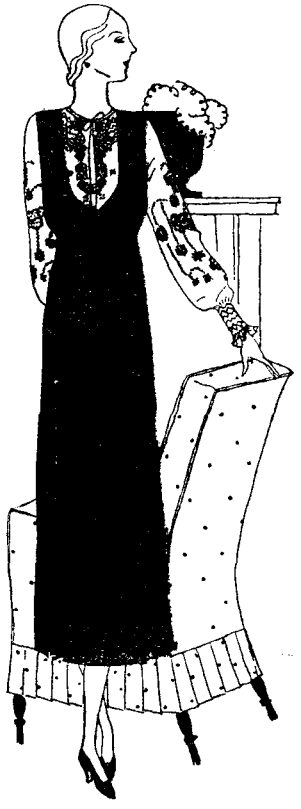
The gold standard in Germany today is of course a myth, judged by any reasonable definition of the term. When a country suspends payments under a moratorium, freezing agreement, or other device, it goes off the gold basis quite as definitely as when the central bank announces that it will no longer sell gold, as the Bank of England did on September 20. Any New York banker with balances tightly frozen in Germany will agree without much quibbling that that country is no longer on a gold basis. The effects of abandonment manifest themselves, however, in various ways. Great Britain merely let the sterling exchange rate slide down to a point where demand balances supply from day to day, and thereby establishes a price. Anyone can still withdraw sterling balances from London if he is willing to sell his pounds for $3.26, or some other depreciated figure, instead of the old par of $4.86. Germany, however, has chosen to stabilize the exchange rate close to the parity of 23.8 cents per mark—by persuading foreign creditors not to sell their marks in sufficient volume to break the price.

Through the chinks and crevices of the *Stillhaltung* agreement, however, the funds of the Reichsbank have been trickling away. Gold holdings are $250,000,000 less than a year ago, and the reserve in foreign currency (bank deposits abroad) is $80,000,000 less. The total of these two assets in the latest report was approximately only $300,000,000. Dr. Luther, president of the Reichsbank, has undertaken to show where some of the losses have occurred. He points out that between July 31 and the middle of November repayments of foreign credits have amounted to about $250,000,000—this during the term of the "freezing" agreement. Excess of German merchandise exports over imports, totaling $230,000,000 from September 1 to November 15, would not have been sufficient to cover repayments on foreign capital account, even if all credits resulting from the export excess could have been earmarked for that purpose.

For Germany, then, abandonment of the gold standard would mean withdrawal of further support from the mark exchange, leaving the rate to find its market level as sterling has done. It might also mean the issue of increasing volumes of paper money in Germany, without any reference to the amount of gold coverage which the Reichsbank could supply, though already that coverage has fallen to about 25 per cent, against a legal requirement of 40 per cent, recently reduced by government decree to 30.

It seems probable that the ill effects of gold-standard "abandonment" would consist chiefly in dispelling any illusions which may now be entertained as to Germany's financial strength. No one could be unduly shocked who has followed the course of events abroad in recent months. Indeed, one result of a natural, if heavily depreciated, exchange rate might be to effect a measure of "thawing" in German finance and industry, a substitution of motion for the present immobility.

S. PALMER HARMAN



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Books, Drama, Films

Salvos for Randolph Bourne

By HORACE GREGORY

I

O bitterness never spoken, the death mask etched in silver,
the dark limbs rolled in lead where the shallow grave conceals
despair: the image of a large head, forward, devouring
the collarbone. No general in brass over it and no
conquering angel kneels.

II

This was the end: there were no firing squads,
no City Hall Nathan Hale with a bronze cord at his throat
speaking of lives and his country where a hundred million
lives
rose, wavered, shattered like an invisible sea coiling
against a rock, no longer there, but sunken
into a shore line of weeds and sand.

Only a small room and a million words to be written before
midnight
against poverty and idiot death like the gray face of Emerson
fading in New England winter twilight, the hard face
vanishing
in snow, the passionately soft words issuing from the mouth—
O listen to the rock, the oracle no longer there!

III

To be the last American, an embryo coiled in a test tube,
to be a fixed and paralytic smile cocked upward to the clouds,
to see friends and enemies depart (around the corner)
their sticks and smart fedoras bright in sunlight—
to be or not to be Hamlet, the Prince of Wales,
or last week's *New Republic;*
to be death delicately walking between chimney pots on
Eighth Street,
possibly this is best to be
or not to be.

Harris Versus Shaw

Bernard Shaw. An Unauthorized Biography Based on First-Hand Information. By Frank Harris. With a Postscript by Mr. Shaw. Simon and Schuster. $4.

WITHIN a few years of one another Frank Harris and Bernard Shaw came up from nowhere to lay siege to London. Equally unknown and equally picturesque, they both rose to fame in a most improbable fashion, and since they met rather early, each followed the career of the other with intimate interest. But the rising curve of the one soon crossed the descending curve of the other, and when they met for the last time upon the Riviera they met as a triumphant success and a complete failure. Shaw was the most famous and probably the richest playwright in the world; Harris was an outcast from literature as well as from society and, by his own confession, not more than one jump ahead of legal bankruptcy.

Under the circumstances it was inevitable that Harris, desperately in need of copy, should think of his fortunate rival, and it was also natural, at least, that Shaw should object. In 1930 he was declaring, "I won't have you write my life on any terms," and a few months later he was protesting with characteristically disarming brutality, "If you publish a word of mine I'll have the law on you. . . . Any fool can get a book published if he can persuade the publishers that I have written it." But he yielded inch by inch, and the posthumous book now appears enriched by a number of Shavian letters and a sizable postscript in which the subject not only confesses that he corrected the proofs but adds a brilliant sketch of Harris's character. The result may not be—in fact it is not—conventional biography. It is loosely written, and it contains very few facts not already familiar. But it makes fascinating reading as a study in clashing temperaments, and constitutes a document which ought to be missed by no one who is interested either in character or in the technique of success.

Doubtless the two men were not equally endowed with genius. Yet differences in character and temperament probably had more to do with the course of their careers than differences in talent had, and though no one will ever know the full secret of the one's success and the other's failure, it is easy to sense in the pages of the present volume many reasons why the one triumphed and the other collapsed. Even if there be some truth in the vague rumors which attribute to Harris plainly dishonorable acts, yet such acts are not necessary to account for the debacle, for there is a subtle but very important difference between the apparently similar buccaneering truculences of the two men. In Shaw impudence, egotism, and ostentatious intransigence were all part of a technique of getting on; in Harris they were the uncontrollable manifestations of an unconquerable wilfulness. Shaw said the wrong thing at the right time; Harris said the wrong thing at the wrong time, and there is all the difference in the world between the two actions.

People laughed at the one but they hated the other, and in the end Harris paid the penalty for flouting his audience, while Shaw reaped the reward for flattering it in a subtle, oblique, but carefully calculated fashion. Shaw's hidden strength lay in the fact that at bottom he wanted success and money more than he wanted anything else, while Harris could never for long put anything second to the pleasure of going his own sweet way. Everyone remembers Oscar Wilde's remark: "Frank has been invited to all the great houses in London—*once*." Rodin's reply to a question concerning Shaw's French is less well known, but should be put beside it for the sake of the significant difference which it reveals: "Monsieur Shaw ne parle pas bien; mais il s'exprime avec une telle violence qu'il s'impose."

Harris's final estimate of his subject is far from flattering. He grants him a personality which will be long remembered, but he denies him greatness either as an artist or as a thinker, and he very clearly implies a conspicuous lack of moral courage besides. The plays depend upon the ideas in them, but it is impossible to say exactly what these ideas are, and Shaw, despite all the wildness of his talk, has never actually committed himself to anything even faintly dangerous. He began as a Fabian, he had the support of the government in his very ambiguous, if not actually disingenuous, war-time attitude, and he has nothing to contribute to those who are struggling to save socialism in England except a vague and wholly theoretical admiration for both Stalin and Mussolini. What are we to say of a philosopher whose ideas cannot possibly be systematized, and what are we to say of a revolutionist who has always managed somehow to keep in with the most respectable people?

The charge is damning, but it is hardly possible to deny that it contains a rather uncomfortable amount of truth. Shaw has been reckless with words but he has never been reckless with anything else—not even with money; and though he has expounded more interesting ideas than any other living man, I

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for one must confess that, despite an admiration which began in adolescence, I do not myself know what Shaw believes, and would find hopeless any attempt to reconcile his statements with one another. No one could have been more valuable than he was because no one could have started discussions more effectively than he did. But it was chiefly as a stimulant that he was valuable, and he has done little toward concluding any one of the numberless arguments which in one way or another he has provoked. A showman of ideas, he became the victim of his own showman's gift, and he will probably be remembered neither as a playwright nor as a philosopher, but chiefly as a man who beat a drum so effectively that he enticed an apathetic public to that main tent where greater men than he were performing.

Incidentally, it is amusing to note that Harris, the exhibitionistic satyr, finally worried the prudish Shaw into giving him a statement concerning the latter's sex life, and in view of the notorious sexlessness of the Shavian drama the statement is worth quoting:

> I lived a continent virgin until I was twenty-nine, and ran away even when the handkerchief was thrown me. From that time until my marriage there was always some kind lady available, and I tried all the experiments and learned all that there was to be learned from them. . . . But you may count the women who have left me nothing to desire on the fingers of one hand. . . . I found sex hopeless as a basis for permanent relations and never dreamt of marriage in connection with it. I put everything else before it and never refused or broke an engagement to speak on socialism to pass a gallant evening. . . . In permanence and seriousness my consummated love affairs count for nothing beside the ones that were either unconsummated or ended by discarding that relation. And now, no romance and above all no pornography. G. B. S.

Harris sniffs, but he makes no pretense of doubting the facts, and indeed there is no reason for doing so. In general, ascetics lie as unconscionably about their sex experiences as Don Juans do, but there is nothing inherently improbable about Shaw's statement.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Sacco-Vanzetti Case Reweighed

The Sacco-Vanzetti Case. By Osmond K. Fraenkel. Alfred A. Knopf. $5.

NO criminal case since the Dreyfus affair has stirred the world so much as that of Sacco and Vanzetti. The conviction of Mooney was a clearer instance of the miscarriage of justice; the trial judge himself is now convinced that it was brought about by deliberate perjury. But if William James be trusted, insensibility to abstract justice is characteristic of the American people; and those who disapprove of Mooney's career in the labor movement can say, as they do: "He is a bad man, and ought to be in jail, even if not guilty of the particular outrage of which he was convicted. The State of California did enough for him by commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment." Not so in regard to Sacco and Vanzetti. They are now dead, and in life were either cold-blooded, mercenary murderers or else, as their letters reveal them, singularly high-minded, if unpractical, idealists. Their guilt or innocence is thus a matter of intense faith to millions who have never examined the record of the case. Nor is the latter task an easy one. Very few have the time and the disposition to go through six volumes of detailed testimony, motions, arguments, and technical judicial decisions, in order to arrive at an independent opinion on a case which was legally terminated four years ago.

And yet the question whether Massachusetts did or did not, in a state of hysteria, execute two innocent men, is of the utmost importance to those who care at all for actual justice.

One of Voltaire's chief claims to fame was that he fought for years to prove that an old man, Calas, was broken at the wheel only because he was a Protestant in a Catholic community. And numerous other brave and enlightened Frenchmen fought hard to prove that Dreyfus was convicted only because he was a Jew. What shall we think of those Americans who contend that Sacco and Vanzetti were cruelly done to death because they were dissenting foreigners? Our conservatives, like the French clericals and militarists, preach the duty of blind, unquestioning faith in Massachusetts and in the infallibility of her officials. But that is inconsistent with the mentality of free men, and really subversive of all the traditional ideals of Americanism. It is the claim of our conservatives that our courts are bulwarks of justice against popular hysteria. Was that true in this particular case? Only a careful study of the evidence will enable us to give an honest answer one way or the other. And for this purpose Mr. Fraenkel's book is most helpful. It is indeed a great public service to give us in one volume a remarkably clear account of the legal history of the case and a transparently fair analysis of its principal issues. I do not know of any book on a public question that exceeds its scrupulous honesty in handling all the available evidence. The essentials of the case are put before us in the first two hundred pages illumined by apt extracts from the record. This includes an appendix on the Bridgewater case, in which Vanzetti was condemned for an attempted hold-up. Mr. Fraenkel deals quite objectively with the evidence (he mentions without comment, for example, an identification of Vanzetti as having "run like a foreigner"). He is rightly critical and cautious about accepting the subsequent confession of Silva (printed in the *Outlook*) which exonerated Vanzetti. But Mr. Fraenkel admits that "Silva's knowledge of the case was great and that the opportunities for collecting such knowledge after the event were very slight." It might be added that Silva was hardly of the type that could or would make a study of the official record.

In the second part of the book we have the analysis of all the points advanced to prove Sacco and Vanzetti guilty of the Braintree murder and a similar treatment of the chief counter-contentions of the defense:

1. The first point relates to the identification of the accused as having been at or near the scene of the crime. I think that after reading what Mr. Fraenkel has written no fair-minded man will deny that the government witnesses had little chance to observe the actual murderers. Nor were the identifications made under the safeguards that common sense and sound police practice dictate. Some of the witnesses, like Lotta Packard, offered obviously absurd testimony in order to get into the case. None of the witnesses for the prosecution were positive all the time. The only government witness who claimed to have seen the actual shooting was not only contradicted by other witnesses, but he told a quite different story to both sides before the trial. On the other hand, not only witnesses for the defense but even a government witness positively denied that Sacco and Vanzetti were the men involved. Mr. Gould, who admittedly had the best opportunity of all to get a full view of the murderers, was never given a chance to testify. But so strong was his subsequent affidavit to the effect that Sacco and Vanzetti could not have been the men he saw, and so weak did the government's case seem in retrospect in 1924, that Judge Thayer was forced to say that the verdict did not rest on the identification of the accused men by eye-witnesses.

2. It was argued that one of the fatal bullets had been fired through the pistol carried by Sacco. There was little evi-

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dence for this and the district attorney himself did not at first take much stock in it. But later he and the judge "put it over" on the jury by perverting the intent of Captain Proctor's testimony. The latter's subsequent affidavit clearly pointed this out, but, alas, in vain.

3. During the trial it was also contended that a cap found on the scene of the murder was Sacco's. But the evidence for it was so insufficient and so contradicted by most reliable testimony that the Lowell committee dismissed it as trifling. Yet in arguing against a new trial, the district attorney contended that the cap was sufficient basis for conviction.

4. It was also urged that the gun found on Vanzetti at the time of his arrest belonged to one of the victims of the crime. It is on the face of it inherently improbable that anyone who planned a crime so carefully as to prepare peculiar tacks to interfere with pursuing cars, should for weeks after the act carry the evidence of the crime about his person. In fact, the real evidence on this point was so flimsy that both district attorney and judge had to misrepresent it to impress the jury.

5. Judge Thayer himself, especially in his subsequent defense of the conviction, insisted on the consciousness of guilt which Sacco and Vanzetti had shown at the time of their arrest. This of course is readily explained by the fact that they were afraid that because of their radicalism they would be maltreated like their friend Salsedo. It cannot be denied that not only the lies that both Sacco and Vanzetti told to the district attorney, but also those that some of their friends told on the witness stand, profoundly prejudiced judge and jury against them. But here we must note that people such as the Italians, Russians, and others who have lived under oppressive governments get into the fixed habit of not telling the truth to government officials, just as patriotic soldiers avoid telling the truth to their enemy captors.

For the defense, Mr. Fraenkel considers, in the first place, the alibis of both Sacco and Vanzetti. Sacco's testimony that he was in Boston on the day of the murder is not only corroborated by others, but his own recognition of a fellow-passenger on the train from Boston is clearly incompatible with his presence that day at Braintree.

To get around this point Governor Fuller distorted the testimony, and President Lowell acted as a partisan seeking to vindicate the prosecution. When President Lowell thought he had secured evidence to discredit one of the supports of Sacco's alibi he exclaimed, "There goes your strong alibi." But when it turned out that Sacco's witnesses were right on the particular point at issue, he ignored the matter.

The innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti becomes reasonably certain when we consider the strong cumulative evidence that the murder was committed by the Morelli gang as confessed by one of its members, Madeiros. There was obstinate fanaticism in the way this phase of the case was passed over by Judge Thayer and the Lowell committee. The crime was clearly the work of professional or experienced bandits who had studied all the phases of their job, such as when the money would be carried, when their own car should arrive and get away, and how to elude pursuing cars. Will a skilled laborer like Sacco, with a growing family, a garden, and a savings-bank account, suddenly take a day off from work to join professional bandits in such a desperate enterprise? No part of the money was in fact ever traced to Sacco or Vanzetti. And the Morelli gang not only had the requisite motive and experience to commit the robbery but were in funds right after it.

In view of the fact that no other court really passed on the question of Judge Thayer's prejudice, it is important to consider his own intemperate expressions to Professor Richardson and others. Can anyone who gloated so at what he did "to those anarchist bastards" be rationally considered free from prejudice? Yet Judge Thayer not only presided at both trials and passed on the new evidence offered by the defendants, but was also the judge of his own fairness. No wonder that so many of our law-school teachers, including Judge Hinton, an authority on the law of evidence with judicial experience of his own, publicly and emphatically declared that Sacco and Vanzetti did not have a fair trial.

Mr. Fraenkel has had to restrict his task to the purely legal side of the case. He does, however, refer to the general anti-red panic of the time as a significant circumstance. If so, would it not have been relevant to make more of the letters that Sacco and Vanzetti wrote from prison? Surely such letters throw some light on the character of their writers. If I were to accuse an archbishop or college president of having picked my pocket, it would surely be reasonable to demand more evidence than that which would be sufficient to convict one who had shown a more ready disposition for that sort of enterprise. For that reason I think all those who wish to avail themselves of the best evidence on this case should also read "The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti," edited by Gardner Jackson and Marion Frankfurter.

It is to be hoped that someone will write a careful history of the human side of the whole case, of all that went on behind the scene and caused the various changes of public, newspaper, and official opinion. But no one will have to write again concerning the trial and the evidence. Mr. Fraenkel has done it so as to leave nothing more to be desired.

MORRIS R. COHEN

An Austere Poet

Jane Matthew and Other Poems. By Eda Lou Walton. Brewer, Warren and Putnam. $2.

ART is metaphor so much of the time that we forget how at intervals it is undoubtedly nothing more than passionate plain statement. Some of our best poetry is simply this—a great moment when the poet says with unaccountable energy, "I fear," "I do not fear," "I hate," "I am." The reader repeats these words and they become his own. Miss Walton's work seems to me to be a case in point; we have few writers of this kind among us, and fewer still who find themselves. There is a quality in Miss Walton's work that shows kinship with Emily Brontë. When we recall the older poet we remember that she made small use of double meaning, overtone, or playful implication in her verse; that she took no round-abouts with rhetoric or symbolism. Those who study the craft of verse do not study a Brontë, because there is nothing that can be learned, technically, from such writing. When this verse fails of its highest register it often falls flat. It is quite incapable of virtuosity, being stark rather than flexible. A Lapland austerity selects for it only those readers who share the same rigorous spirit.

Miss Walton's country-of-the-mind is the great desert of New Mexico—this place, wherever she writes best, is the assumed background, and throughout her work a rocklike bareness, nobility, and economy mark both her feeling and the very texture of her stanzas. For this reason she is unfitted for writing a long poem such as the one which opens the book. Here, in seventy-four pages of blank verse, Miss Walton squanders her talents, losing, it seems to me, all the advantages of a prose rendering without gaining any of the intensity of high poetry. She does, by sheer force, tell a difficult story; but one that seems to me to be from the outset an unsympathetic one. Not even the best of the long-poem poets have written well enough to solve the problem of this form, in our own time; but certainly the best of them have to an eminent degree a mastery of light and shade, variety, metrical flexibility, natural ease, and the

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gift of surprise. All Miss Walton's gifts lie in an opposite direction. If she continues to write lyrics of the quality this book contains, she will accomplish in a limited form what the long-poem poet cannot achieve.

In so far as The Blue Room, her second long poem, is dominated by the ideal of lyrical power, it is successful. This narrative is told in a series of seventy-three sonnets; a neurotic woman comes to New Mexico

> to find
> How reason might unite her heart and mind.

Miss Walton pictures a desert that does not heal the foreigner and a ruthless wind that tears apart the sick nerves as quickly as it would a wilted garden flower. Her story has a reportorial actuality which makes it recall the subject matter of William Ellery Leonard's "Two Lives." Her sonnets rise and fall like the shapes of the desert itself; all her descriptions are memorable. Most memorable of all is the March wind:

> Everything shifts, even
> Houses lean low against the dreary sound.
> All roads are blotted out, the sands advance
> In tidal dunes across each field and round
> Each greenish meadow, in frenzy play and dance
> Over each roof.

Or again:

> Aggressively
> The wind's round rhythm hugs each lonely house,
> Nor even at night is stilled, but spins cocoons
> Of sound all night.

But the lyrics are the best. These Humble People, Sun Dial, Cyclic Chill, and Recessional have climbed out of the human world into stark meditation. A stoic strength grew from Emily Brontë's identification with the Yorkshire moors, and found final expression in "No Coward Soul Is Mine." Something similar to it has infused Miss Walton's best work; and the lesson in her case, too, has been learned from a dispassionate environment. Emily Brontë wrote her poems to assert her faith in undying life; Miss Walton makes, with much less passionate strength but with equal firmness, a contrary statement. Whether we fully experience the belief in immortality or the conviction of oblivion, either takes courage; and Miss Walton's stoicism is the attitude of our time.

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

Books in Brief

Gaynor. By Louis Heaton Pink. The International Press. $2.75.

Mr. Pink has written a most engaging story of that choleric old warrior, Mayor William J. Gaynor of New York, taking him through his bitter struggles as lawyer, judge, and mayor, and giving us a picture of the campaigns for reform in New York from 1890 to 1913. Gaynor might have been President instead of Woodrow Wilson if he had not possessed an uncontrollable temper, if he had run for governor of New York in 1910, and if he had handled the Rosenthal murder case wisely. As it was, he came to the mayoralty too late. Mr. Pink describes him as "the Tammany mayor who swallowed the Tiger," which is somewhat unfortunate in view of the recent signs of life in the old beast. The life of Gaynor seems to be the best proof that no individual but only a powerful new party will ever be able to swallow the Tiger and keep him swallowed.

The Kid. By D. P. Berenberg. The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

Here is another of these prize-fight poems done in lively verse—a convincing narrative of action. And this time the fighter is a Jew, and the story is, in good part, that of his spiritual struggle and defeat, for the hero is sensitive and imaginative and the game he engages in terrifies him. The book has this to commend it—that it analyzes the significance of the life of the fighter and makes clear its motivation and its horror.

The Delicate Situation. By Naomi Royde-Smith. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

Had this novel been offered to us as a posthumous work by the author of "Cranford" it would probably have been enthusiastically received by many as Mrs. Gaskell's strongest tale. The plot is one that has been used in many a mid-Victorian novel; the humor of character has all the charm and the pathos, all the tenderness, of the mid-Victorian county novel; and the spirit as well as the language is almost perfect in its imitation of the stories of seventy years ago. The more wary reader would not be fooled, however—not quite. And the thin edge of modernity gives a double edge to the satire. The characters and story and humor by themselves, however, afford delightful entertainment.

In Krusack's House. By Thames Williamson. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

Although the locale is less remote, Thames Williamson's latest novel is not so effective as his earlier "The Earth Told Me." The structure of the story is as simple as the characters, although incompatibility and infidelity among inarticulate people is not a simple theme. Mr. Williamson does as well by it as can be expected; but like all novels which in the final analysis of their technique depend upon the sophisticated, subtle understanding by the reader of what the characters can only grossly feel, "In Krusack's House" is fundamentally incomplete and inaccurate. It falls between the stools of realism and romance.

The Inquisition. By A. Hyatt Verrill. D. Appleton and Company. $3.

Mr. Verrill, though still a young man, is the author of thirteen books on various impressive subjects. Hardly a season arrives without at least one opus from his pen, written in Sunday-feature style and with a corresponding lack of scholarship and ideas. The preface to this book attempts to justify it by claiming two novelties of approach. One is to deny any historical definiteness to the Inquisition and regard it as the outgrowth of the Roman secret service and penal system. The same logic should, however, trace it to Adam or the evolutionary baboon. The other novelty is to see the Inquisition as inevitable and even useful:

> It is nothing short of appalling to speculate on what might have been the results had the Inquisition not been inaugurated and maintained during these long centuries, when, on every hand, innumerable fantastic, weird, and often most repulsive forms of religion were springing up. Devil worship, witchcraft, sorcery, Bacchanalian orgies, lust, every form of vice and immorality would have overrun the then civilized world, and Europe would have been a teeming hotbed of cults worse than voodooism at its worst.

This quotation serves as a measure of Mr. Verrill's authority, judgment, and style.

Norman Douglas. By H. M. Tomlinson. Harper and Brothers. $2.

Opinion as to this little book will probably be evenly divided between those who think that Norman Douglas is one of the world's great misunderstood geniuses, and those who find him a mere decadent, though admittedly of a colorful and swashbuckling sort. Even the Douglas admirers, we feel, will agree that Mr. Tomlinson's brief monograph is a rather irritating performance, diffident, manneristic, and thin. Mr. Tom-

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linson seems oddly with himself at war on the subject of his portrait. Part of him evidently admires—as who does not—the joyous and slashing polemist who appears in certain pages of "Alone," and in the "Defence of Maurice Magnus"; while the other part distrusts the questionable and garrulous moralist who putters about in "South Wind" and similar rubbish. Mr. Douglas, considered under certain aspects, seems to bid fair to become a kind of Nordic or Pictish André Gide, though he mercifully lacks the sly, incessant, utterly wearing, and tiresome sexuality of the Protestant Balzac. In short, he is much more variegated and amusing, and this is without doubt his great charm. There is a fine portrait of him in Compton Mackenzie's underrated and exceedingly funny novel about Capri life, "Vestal Fire," a much more sympathetic portrait, let us add, than the pale profile which dimly appears in Mr. Tomlinson's high-toned prose. Practically the only enduring impression one derives from the thin book is that Mr. Tomlinson considers Douglas "dangerous," but evidently enjoys the thrill. "Suddenly," remarks Mr. Tomlinson, "he will raise the question as to whether it would not be better to go to the dogs than to Jesus," adding rather acutely: "Whatever we choose to think of Jesus, we know that dogs are dogs, and return to their vomit." Mr. Tomlinson does not intend this statement as an epitaph, but it might easily serve as one.

Endless River. By Felix Riesenberg. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

What here passes for an extraordinary experiment in prose style and in novel technique is nothing in the world but a series of sometimes complete, sometimes incomplete (much as "The Lady or the Tiger" is incomplete) sketches, some of which resemble very closely the materials out of which Jonathan Leonard fashions his peculiar and often remarkable novels. The sketches are interspersed with comments which aim to be satiric.

Strange Brother. By Blair Niles. Horace Liveright. $2.50.

The author of "Strange Brother" takes her homosexual hero through as many mental sufferings as she can, then puts a pistol in his hand and lets him shoot himself and end the book. The content of the novel is made up of the fact that the hero is homosexual, and of the reactions of other people and their not very bright comments. If the unspeakable June had not been created to make people "talk" about themselves, there would have been no novel.

Selected Poems. By Glenn Ward Dresbach. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

Mr. Dresbach has always had the trick of writing very pleasant descriptive poetry. His background has been the Far Western mountain country and the desert and he has done very well by it. New Mexico, in particular, he paints with accuracy. His observation of his scene, of the wild life there, of the simple people one may meet is intimate and delightful. He is not, of course, a particularly important poet, nor is he motivated by any great intensity. His poetry is magazine verse of a fairly high order.

Jasbo Brown. By DuBose Heyward. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

This book contains many new lyrics and a selected group from the earlier verses of DuBose Heyward. The best poems have to do with Negroes and with the Southern mountaineers. The poet shows himself a student of character, an accurate observer of scene and circumstance—possessed, in other words, of the attributes of the novelist and the dramatist. His verse is graceful and simple, without artifice of any kind and handled with some skill. Now and then there are fine lines. But one remembers chiefly the people drawn and the stories told.

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Drama

International Incidents

IT was once generally believed that a European success counted for more than it should in the American theater. We were supposed to be provincial snobs unduly impressed by the approval of our betters, and we were blamed for being only too ready to applaud what England or France had first approved. But if there was ever any truth in the horrid charge, it is baseless now, for conspicuous European successes have recently had a way of fading off our stage with a regularity which must be very disconcerting to managers who hoped to be able to play safe. At least a dozen examples could easily be cited from recent years, but a few instances afforded by the present season will do. "The Good Companions" gave up after something of a struggle, but "The Sex Fable"—which had kept Paris in paroxysms for two whole seasons—disappeared before any except those who make a business of following the theater even knew that it was here. So, too, did "Lean Harvest" and "The Lady with the Lamp."

Doubtless mere accident and mere caprice have something to do with all this; but at least in the case of the English plays it is evident, I think, that there is something in the whole tone and manner of a great many of them which is more than likely to leave us cold. Of recent years the American playwright has been becoming more and more bold, but his English fellows seem determined to lower their voices into a gentle whisper, and to turn aside from the major issues in order to concern themselves with the most tepid, if not the most trivial, incidents of domestic life. Our plays may often be crude enough, but they are very likely to have passion of some sort in them, and passion is just the thing which seems conspicuously lacking in too many of the plays which come to us from London. These latter are seldom absurd and they are almost always sensible, but they do not often run any risk of being ridiculous, and they seldom say anything which has not been said so many times before that it must be true.

Consider, for example, the case of "After All" (Booth Theater). The author is that same John Van Druten whose "Young Woodley" attracted much attention a few years ago, and the present play comes to us with the enthusiastic approval of both the English critics and the English public. The *Observer* called it "impassioned," the *Evening News* spoke of its "distinction," and the *Saturday Review* thought it worthy of "pure praise." Yet the New Yorker who goes with these tributes ringing in his ears will find it difficult not to wonder what there is in this mild, repetitious, and essentially undistinguished little play to awaken more than a polite interest. Perhaps it is, as the *Manchester Guardian* said, "true." Perhaps life in the upper middle class of London is as monotonous, as unimaginative, and as completely routine as Mr. Van Druten represents it. But if it is, then there are several remarks which are in order, and the first of them is that the author has fallen far short of his avowed purpose of demonstrating that such a life as this is best —"after all." All England's geniuses from Shakespeare to H. G. Wells must be wrong; all the poets and preachers and prophets must have been barking up the wrong tree when they insisted upon the necessity of stirring the Englishman out of that lethargy which was supposed to be the national vice. For the whole duty of man is an achieved regularity, and the good life is the life imposed by that dull tyranny of well-fed fathers or sedulously spoiled mothers, which—so Mr. Van Druten assures us—can easily be passed on from generation to generation if we will only behave as his characters do.

Let us grant that intimate sketches of domestic manners can never mean to a foreigner what they mean to a native. Let us grant still further that there is indeed some subtle moral or aesthetic difference between that ugly "standardization" which is so repulsive a feature of American life and that noble "regularity" which has been responsible for the greatness of England. There are, nevertheless, sound artistic reasons for preferring the somewhat robustious manner of contemporary American plays to the polite insignificance of English ones. Even when they fail, the former have at least the merit of having attempted something. They reveal some awareness of the fact that the world is not everywhere anemically well bred, and that drama is no longer drama when it is afraid to permit passion to speak upon the stage. One may admit that Mr. Van Druten's play is quiet and sensible. But it is so quiet as to be almost inaudible, and so sensible that it is not far from the fatuous. As for its title, "After All" has the virtue of being colloquial and appropriate. But so too would something like "When All's Said and Done," or even—and more suggestively—"What of It?"

On the other side I must report that I recently paid a visit to "Cynara" (Morosco Theater) and that I found it rather more entertaining than did the deputy who saw it for me when it first appeared. It is true that the moral deduced from this story of a respectable barrister who got entangled in a love affair with a shop girl is not particularly new. It is, however, very clearly stated, and the whole play is written with an easy competence which makes it always entertaining and occasionally moving. It should be remarked, however, that the reference of the title to Ernest Dowson's all too well-known poem is singularly inappropriate. The story is not the story of a congenital philanderer who finds comfort in the dubious phrase "faithful in my fashion," but of an essentially monogamous man who is a victim of circumstance.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"The Second Comin'" (Provincetown Playhouse) is a rather preposterous play about a white pastor who hypnotizes a Negro girl and attempts to satisfy the desire of his superstitious Negro parishioners for a miracle by providing them with an immaculately conceived "black Christ."

H. H.

Films

"Arrowsmith"

ONE of the main interests in "Arrowsmith" the book lay in the minute knowledge of bacteriology there displayed, out of which grew the drama of an antitoxin for bubonic plague. It was an exciting story, but except for Leora, Gottlieb, and perhaps Sondelius, the characters did not come alive for me, and the bristling episodes of Main Street stupidity —episodes peopled with types and ending typically—did not contribute to the ultimate theme, namely, the struggle between the scientist who is ready to sacrifice life in order to be able to save it, in later generations, through immunity, and the doctor who saves lives at the risk of learning nothing exact about a disease or its cure. "Arrowsmith" the motion picture (Gaiety Theater) obviously could not pay much attention to bacteriological detail. It had no room for the episodes of small-town life which crowd the book. It contented itself, therefore, with a lavish display of test tubes, skipped most of the episodes, and concentrated upon the ultimate theme, with the result that so far as the story is concerned the picture is more vivid than the book. It is melodramatic, of course, and the tropics in which the plague rages are Hollywood tropics; but the story in the

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book, told barely, is no less melodramatic, while such imaginative photographic bits as plague-bearing rats running, almost incandescent in the light from a burning village, add much to the effectiveness of the tale.

The casting of the picture is excellent, even though in important instances it does not quite fit the book. Thus the character presented by Ronald Colman is hardly Martin Arrowsmith, small-town grandson of an American pioneer. It is a richer, more sophisticated character who has neither the unmodulated voice nor the awkward eagerness of the Martin of the book. But once past the early scenes in which the more tangible traits have any significance, Mr. Colman becomes believable and lovable enough as the doctor with a passion for research. As for Helen Hayes, with her well-known competence and understanding she develops the part of Leora to its fullest possibilities of tenderness and strength. Richard Bennett as Sondelius is convincing; Gottlieb, the abstract scientist, is more competent and less appealing in the picture than in the book, but nevertheless well played by A. E. Anson. The story, though it is necessarily much cut, is faithful to the original, and Sidney Howard has done an excellent job of adaptation. It need hardly be pointed out, however, that the process of picturization inevitably involves a shift of emphasis from ideas, which play the more important part in the book, to action, which is essential to an absorbing film.

It must be said that the picture, like the book, leaves the spectator a little confused. In both, the conflict between the immediate relief of human suffering and distant immunity for all mankind seems to be identified with the fight on Main Street between stupidity and intelligence, when as a matter of fact the former struggle might well enlist intelligence on both sides.

"Arrowsmith" is a superior motion picture admirably directed, beautifully photographed. But the fact remains that the perfect film will never come out of a book. True, some books lend themselves to filming more readily than others. "All Quiet on the Western Front," being essentially a visual account of stirring events hung around the dominating central theme of war, was obviously good movie material. "Arrowsmith," based as it is on a book of episodes centered around an idea, cannot help seeming merely synoptic for almost half its length, or until it gets into the final episode, which contains all the important action of the story. MARGARET MARSHALL

Contributors to This Issue

GLENN FRANK is president of the University of Wisconsin.

ARTHUR EVANS WOOD, professor of sociology at the University of Michigan, was a delegate to the President's Conference on Home Building and Ownership.

ALANSON B. HOUGHTON, former Ambassador to Germany and to Great Britain, has a knowledge of the present European situation equaled by few Americans.

PAUL Y. ANDERSON is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

A. FENNER BROCKWAY is the author of "The Government of India" and "A Week in India," and has recently been chosen editor of the *New Leader*.

HORACE GREGORY has recently published a translation of Catullus.

MORRIS R. COHEN, professor of philosophy at the College of the City of New York, is the author of "Reason and Nature."

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD is the author of several volumes of verse and of "The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson."

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